



OFFICIAL ART

GameOn

MEN FIGHT. GODS SMITE.



SMITE

BATTLEGROUND OF THE GODS

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From The Editor

Welcome to Issue #12 of the Official SMITE Magazine. The more astute of you may have realised a bit of a change within the magazine since the last issue. Well, let's address that now! Between this issue and the previous one, The SMITE Community Magazine has transformed into the Official SMITE Magazine and is now an official product of Hi-Rez Studios. Just be clear however, this is still managed, created, and distributed via GameOn Magazine. Staff of GameOn Magazine also do not work for Hi-Rez Studios.

With that aside, IT'S BEEN A WHOLE YEAR! How is that even possible? It has been 12 months since we first started the mag project. That is just insane. I couldn't be more happy about how it has turned out, the reception from the community as a whole, and how proud I am of all the staff that have taken on this project alongside us. Thank you, everyone. Truly, thank you.

I'd also like to give a special shoutout to SteveSketches for doing a fantastic job on our anniversary edition's front cover! Check him out.

I'll cut this short here and, rather than tell you what's in the magazine, let you take a look for yourself!

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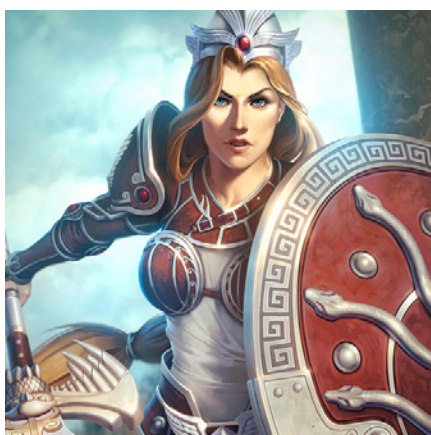
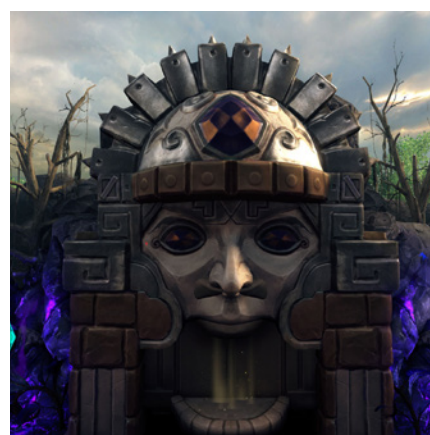
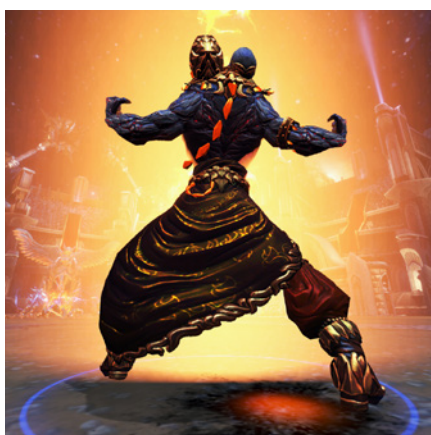
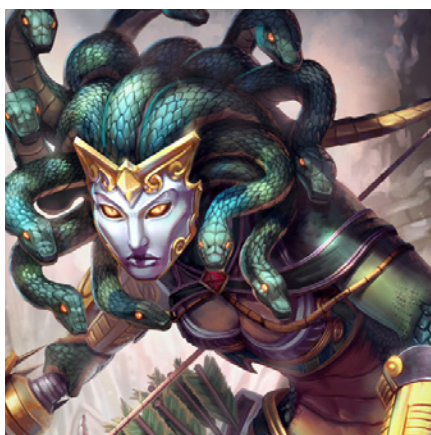
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FIRST BIRTHDAY BASH!

It has been an entire year since SMITE official launched (March 25th, to be exact, for those that were interested)! What a year it has been.

To celebrate, there's a horde of events going on as well promotional offers:

- The God Pack will be being dropped temporarily to \$19.99 from Wednesday 25th through Friday 27th.
- All pre-launch skins will be 50% off their gem price.
- The login bonuses have been doubled!

- If you're looking to purchase gems, now is a great time! From Wednesday 25th through Friday 27th, there will be a gem bonus for the following amounts:

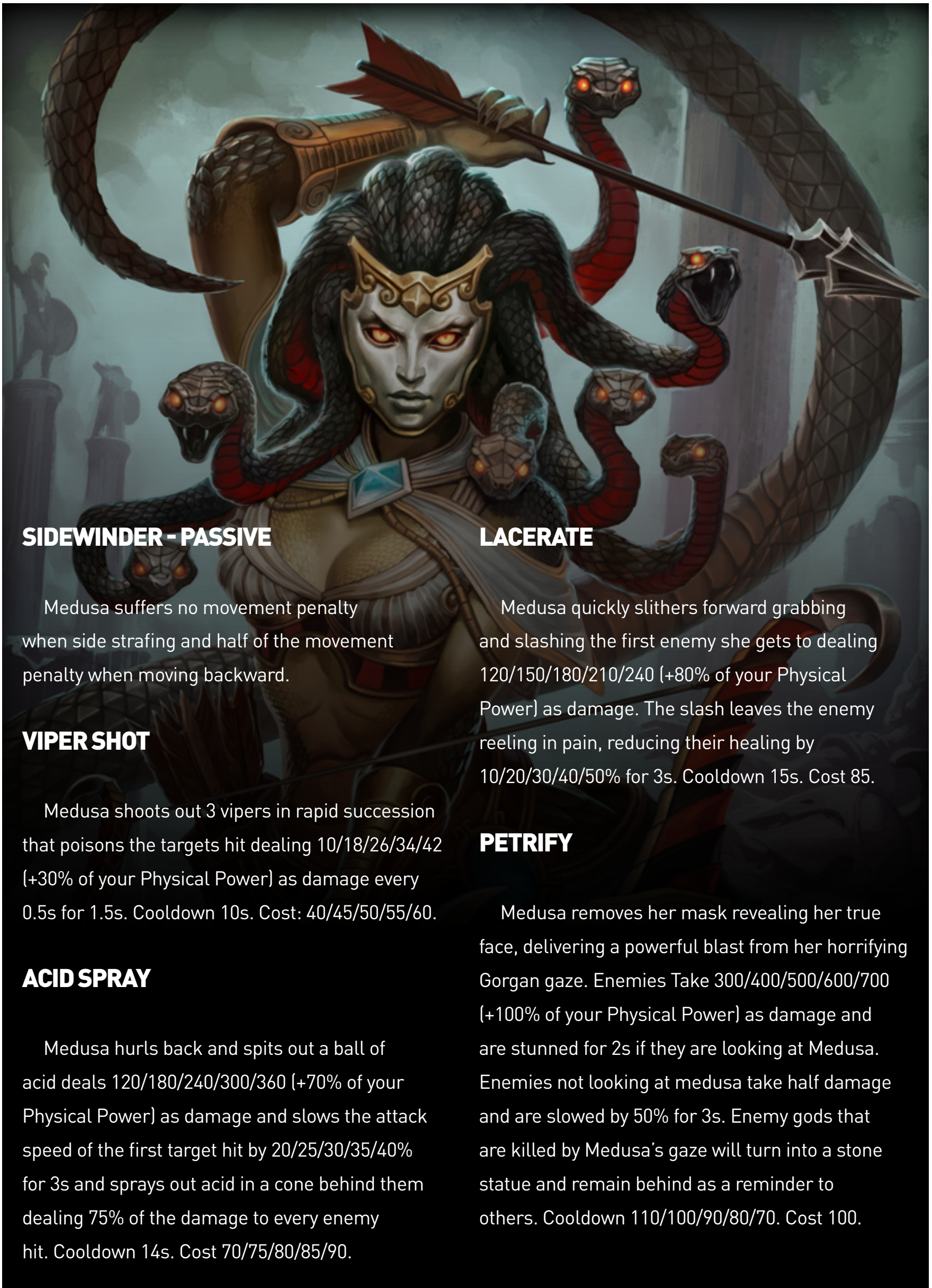
Buy 1,500 - get 200 free!

Buy 2,500 - get 400 free!

Buy 3,500 - get 600 free!

Buy 8,000 - get 1,500 free!

- There will also be a special MOTD on the 25th to commemorate the launch!



SIDEWINDER - PASSIVE

Medusa suffers no movement penalty when side strafing and half of the movement penalty when moving backward.

VIPER SHOT

Medusa shoots out 3 vipers in rapid succession that poisons the targets hit dealing 10/18/26/34/42 (+30% of your Physical Power) as damage every 0.5s for 1.5s. Cooldown 10s. Cost: 40/45/50/55/60.

ACID SPRAY

Medusa hurls back and spits out a ball of acid deals 120/180/240/300/360 (+70% of your Physical Power) as damage and slows the attack speed of the first target hit by 20/25/30/35/40% for 3s and sprays out acid in a cone behind them dealing 75% of the damage to every enemy hit. Cooldown 14s. Cost 70/75/80/85/90.

LACERATE

Medusa quickly slithers forward grabbing and slashing the first enemy she gets to dealing 120/150/180/210/240 (+80% of your Physical Power) as damage. The slash leaves the enemy reeling in pain, reducing their healing by 10/20/30/40/50% for 3s. Cooldown 15s. Cost 85.

PETRIFY

Medusa removes her mask revealing her true face, delivering a powerful blast from her horrifying Gorgan gaze. Enemies Take 300/400/500/600/700 (+100% of your Physical Power) as damage and are stunned for 2s if they are looking at Medusa. Enemies not looking at medusa take half damage and are slowed by 50% for 3s. Enemy gods that are killed by Medusa's gaze will turn into a stone statue and remain behind as a reminder to others. Cooldown 110/100/90/80/70. Cost 100.

AN INTRODUCTION TO SMITE

~~~~~ By Jacob Crawford ~~~~~

So you want to play SMITE, but you have no idea where to begin. You saw it on the front page of IGN and Twitch, you skimmed a headline about it on Kotaku, and you saw an episode about it on Game Theorists. Now you want to know more; you want to play it. You want to find out what all the fuss is about, but you have no clue where to start. MOBAs are tough. They're hard to learn and even harder to master; the maps are dispiriting, the game modes are intimidating, the number of gods is daunting, and the lists of items and builds are just plain disheartening.

But there is hope. Everyone starts somewhere, and Hi-Rez does an excellent job making the game intuitive, accessible, and fun, regardless of time commitment or experience level. From

auto-level and auto-buy to developer-sponsored guides and how-to videos, SMITE is easily the most approachable MOBA on the market. Here is a compilation of everything you need to know to start playing SMITE: Battleground of the Gods.

## WHAT IS SMITE?

SMITE: Battleground of the Gods is a multiplayer online battle arena (MOBA) developed and published by Hi-Rez Studios. In it, teams of mythological gods square off and fight in various arenas. By leveling skills, buying items, farming minions, and coordinating attacks, players work together to defeat enemies and secure objectives. Like







other games, SMITE features a wide selection of playable characters, and each character makes use of five unique active and passive abilities. Likewise, each character fills a specific role: Middle Lane, Carry, Support, Jungle, and Solo Lane. To win games, gods must play well at their positions and work cohesively with others.

Despite its similarities to other MOBAs, SMITE is unique. Most MOBA games feature an overhead view, click-based movements, and RTS-style hotkeys (namely Q,W,E, and R for abilities). SMITE uses an over-the-shoulder third-person camera, WASD controls, and a numbered hotkey system. As a result, the game feels less like a MOBA and more like a shooter or an Action RPG. Players see everything their gods see (for better or worse) and control every movement.

SMITE is also extremely user friendly--especially for newbies. By default, all abilities and items are auto-purchased, allowing players to focus less on builds and strategies and more on playing and having fun. Auto-level and auto-purchase, of course can be turned off in settings;

most players level and build items manually. The game also features several tutorials that can be found within the client (and on YouTube). These tutorials explain everything a new player would ever want to know about the game, including the topics covered in this introduction article.

## GAME MODES

SMITE makes use of five game modes: Conquest, Arena, Joust, Assault, and Siege. For the sake of brevity, this introductory guide will only cover Conquest, Arena, and Siege.

### CONQUEST

Conquest is, more or less, a traditional MOBA map: three lanes protected by Towers, a Jungle filled with temporary beneficial items and monsters, and a base protected by three inhibitors (or Phoenixes). But SMITE changes things slightly. Since the game makes use of an over-the-shoulder camera, the traditional 'top lane/





bottom lane' MOBA jargon is irrelevant. Instead, the game features a long lane and a short lane. The short lane is called, colloquially, the 'single' lane, since only one god is necessary to defend it. Likewise, the long lane is called the 'duo' lane.

Gods spawn in the Fountain, a small area at the edge of each base. While standing in the Fountain, gods are able to regenerate Health and buy items. Players can teleport to the Fountain at any time during a match by pressing the recall button on the keyboard (defaulted to 'B'). Teleporting gods are not immune to damage though, and enemy gods can disrupt a god's teleportation by simply attacking them. Due to this, it is best to teleport away from battle, preferably under a friendly Tower.

SMITE's Conquest Jungle is slightly smaller than that of most other games. As a result, Junglers can move quickly between Camps and lanes, and gods in lanes can efficiently make use of Jungle Buffs. Among the Camps and Buffs available, each half of the map contains a movement speed camp, an attack speed camp, a mana camp, a damage camp, and various experience Camps. Aside from these basic Camps, there are also two challenge Camps--the Gold Fury and the Fire Giant. These Camps require high leveled gods or teams of gods to defeat them. The Gold Fury yields a large sum of gold, and the Fire Giant, the most powerful monster on the map, gives gold and experience.

To win Conquest, a team must defeat the enemy's Titan--a large boss that lives in the enemy's base. Each Titan is guarded by three Phoenixes that, when defeated, weaken the Titan and give a substantial power boost to the offensive team's minions. Phoenixes regenerate after three minutes though, so teams should try to kill the Titan shortly after defeating them.





## SIEGE

Siege is, more or less, a two-lane version of Conquest. Each side of the map contains four Towers, two Phoenixes, and a Titan. The map contains a small Jungle that carries Attack Speed, Attack Damage, and Mana Buffs. Like Conquest, teams must work together to kill minions, topple Towers, defeat Phoenixes, and destroy the enemy Titan, however; unlike Conquest, teams must work together to secure Siege Juggernauts - powerful minions that walk down the lanes, destroy everything in their path.. Each time a minion dies, an enemy god falls, or a team secures a Jungle Buff, a team earns points. When they collect 100 points, they summon a Siege Juggernaut. Alternatively, either team can kill the Wild Juggernaut in the center of the map (which respawns like a Jungle Buff) to secure a Juggernaut. Each team can have a maximum of two Siege Juggernauts active at any one time.

From here, whichever team kills the other's

Titan first wins, much the same as Conquest. But be careful, there's a lot higher Jungle-to-lane ratio in this game mode, so watch out for stray enemies or team rotations!

## ARENA

Arena is SMITE's most popular game mode. Unlike Conquest or Siege, there are no Towers or enemy objectives. Instead, players face off against each other and push minions into the enemy's portal—a metaphysical hole at opposing ends of the map. Each team starts with 500 tickets. To win, teams must kill enemies and enemy minions and escort friendly minions into the enemy's portal. Every time a god dies, five tickets are deducted; every time a minion is killed by a god or enters your portal, a ticket is deducted; and every time a siege Tower (a large minion Tower) enters your portal, fifteen tickets are deducted. The winner is the last team standing.



## STARTER GODS

There are sixty-three playable gods at the time of this writing. That said, finding an easy starter god can be daunting. Here are my three favorite beginner gods.

### RA

Ra is a strong, well-balanced mid-laner. A ranged Mage with healing abilities and crowd control, Ra pushes Towers extremely well. His passive, 'Speed of Light', allows him to gain movement speed every time he uses an ability. 'Celestial Beam', Ra's first ability, fires a beam of light along the ground in front of Ra. Since it clears waves of minions extremely well, it is best to max this ability first. Ra's second ability, Blinding Light, is an aura that charges around Ra. After two seconds, the ability detonates, slowing enemies and dealing damage. Ra's third ability, 'Solar Blessing', creates a ring that functions both offensively and defensively; It damages enemies

and heals allies. Ra's Ultimate attack, 'Searing Pain', shoots a beam of extreme heat in front of Ra, dealing massive damage to all enemies in its path.

### THOR

Thor is a powerful Assassin with high damage and high mobility. Thor's passive ability, 'Warrior's Madness', grants Thor Physical Power for every enemy god within thirty units of him. His first ability, 'Mjolnir's Attunement', is a great mobility tool. Thor throws his hammer, dealing damage to all enemies in its path. As the hammer returns, it does double damage to all enemy gods it hits. Thor can also teleport to his hammer's location mid-throw, allowing Thor to jump quickly into and out of battles. When Thor activates his second ability, 'Tectonic Rift', he smashes the ground, uprooting the ground in front of him. The rift stuns enemies and impedes enemy movement. Thor's third ability, 'Berserker Rage', causes Thor to spin his hammer in a circle, damaging enemies every .4 seconds. Thor's Ultimate, 'Anvil of



Dawn', is one of the most useful assassination moves in the game. Thor flies up into the air and, at the point of your choosing, crashes down on an enemy, dealing damage and Stunning them. When paired with 'Berserker Rage' and 'Mjolnir's Attunement', Thor's Ultimate ends in at least one kill every time he uses it.

## YMIR

Ymir is one of the most solid Guardians in the game. He is extremely tanky, and he can Crowd Control like no one else--a perfect support in the duo lane. His passive ability is 'Frostbite'. Every time Ymir hits an enemy with an ability, he 'frostbites' them, meaning his Basic Attacks on them do 100% more damage for a limited time. His first ability is 'Ice Wall'--a game changer at this year's SMITE World Championship. With this ability, Ymir summons a wall of ice in front of him, potentially saving allies or blocking enemy paths. When used correctly, 'Ice Wall' can set up at least one kill every time Ymir uses it. Ymir's second ability, 'Glacial Strike', is great for clearing minions; it damages gods and slows movement speed. 'Frost Breath', Ymir's third ability, freezes enemies, doing damage and Stunning them. And Ymir's Ultimate, 'Shards of Ice', deals massive damage to all enemies within a limited radius. Although the ability has a three second charge, it is deadly when paired with 'Frost Breath'.

## YOUTUBE AND TWITCH

SMITE makes heavy use of Twitch and YouTube. To get truly good at the game—to learn maps, item builds, and gods' strengths and weaknesses—check out SMITE's official YouTube channel. TrendKILL's "Know Your Enemy" series discusses both the strengths and weaknesses of each god, exposing

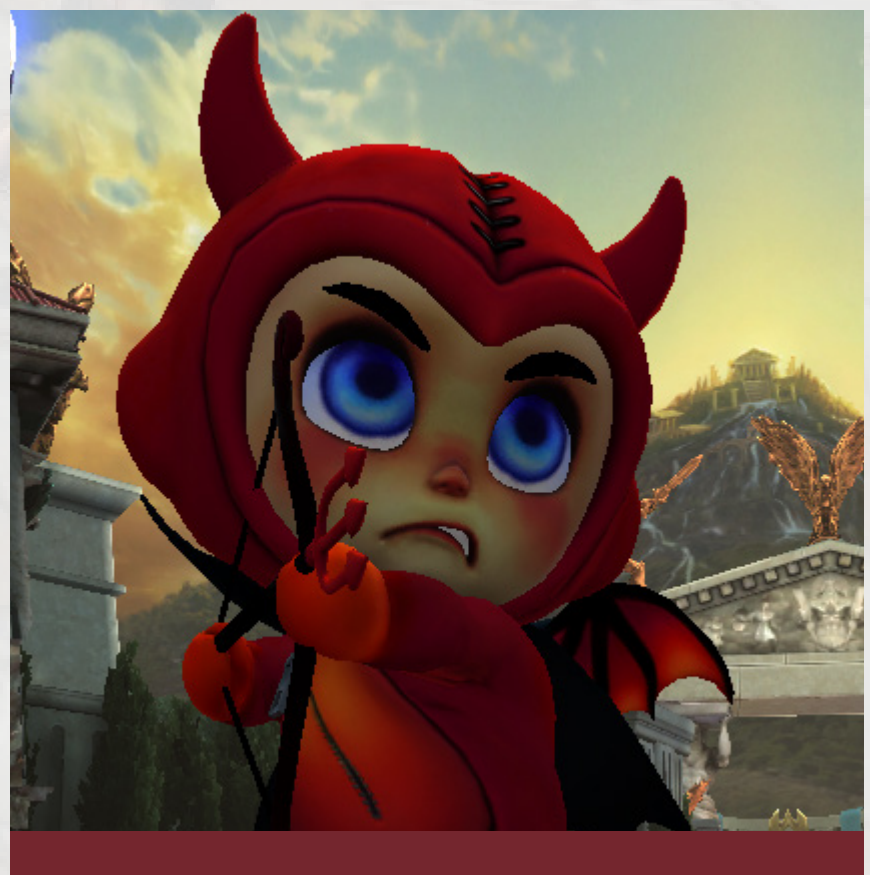
the Achilles' heel of each playable character.

"SMITE Lore" uncovers the histories of various gods, "SMITE Tutorial" gives a detailed overview of the game and its various modes, "SMITE in 60 Seconds" provides a fun, abbreviated look at the game, and "eSports in a Flash" offers a unique look at the world of competitive online sports. For more information, visit their official YouTube channel.

SMITE streams Twitch all day, every day. From F. (pronounce the .) to lilmamacita, there is always someone to watch on the official SMITE channel. And there are tons of user-created content. Since SMITE contains an embedded streaming client, anyone with a Twitch profile can broadcast live gameplay without ever leaving the game client.

## CONCLUSION

SMITE: Battleground of the Gods is one of the most dynamic MOBAs on the market. It is intuitive, user friendly, and fun. We at the SMITE Magazine hope you enjoy SMITE as much as we do, and we hope to meet you again on the battlefield. ■







# THE FIRST ANNUAL SMITE AWARDS!

~~~~~ By Timothy Tian ~~~~~

Welcome everyone to our very first Official SMITE Magazine Award Show! Throughout the first year of the SMITE Community Magazine, there have been many noteworthy events. Skins, painstakingly crafted, have been released. Voice packs have been recorded, not only for the gods but their new skins as well. From the release of 'let me get a cup of coffee while waiting for this CC (crowd control) to end' Hindu god, Kumbhakarna, to the reunion of the Chinese lovers, Chang'e and Hou Yi, we from the magazine have been there to cover it all. Every god this year has put their blood, sweat and tears into the game, and although they have given it their all, only the best dare to push the boundaries to the extent of godliness. Now, in honour of the magazine's first anniversary, we celebrate the year's best as we

present the first ever SMITE Awards! Please note that all nominees consist only of gods released in the year the Official SMITE Magazine has been out.

MOST ANTICIPATED RELEASE

Winner: Ao Kuang

When it was announced that Ao Kuang or 'The Noodle', as worshipers have affectionately named him, was to be remodeled, fans were quick to voice their objections. Being one of the first gods in the game, it was obvious he held a certain nostalgic presence in the hearts of his followers. Some were afraid their favourite dragon would be turned into a humanoid god while others believed that being humanoid would make sense since it would be

accurate in terms of his lore. As the release date drew closer, footage of the newly remodeled Ao Kuang surfaced on the Internet, with the first mention of his release being on the Chinese game client. What followed in the video made this award a no-brainer for Ao Kuang; his new model was shown, his new abilities were displayed and finally, his new ultimate came to view. Ao Kuang turned into this huge dragon, just suspended in the air while the cameras did the rest to showcase his new dragon form. With that, Ao Kuang became the hottest topic on SMITE while everyone awaited his return to the Battleground of the Gods.

BIGGEST ROLLER COASTER RIDE

Winner: Nox

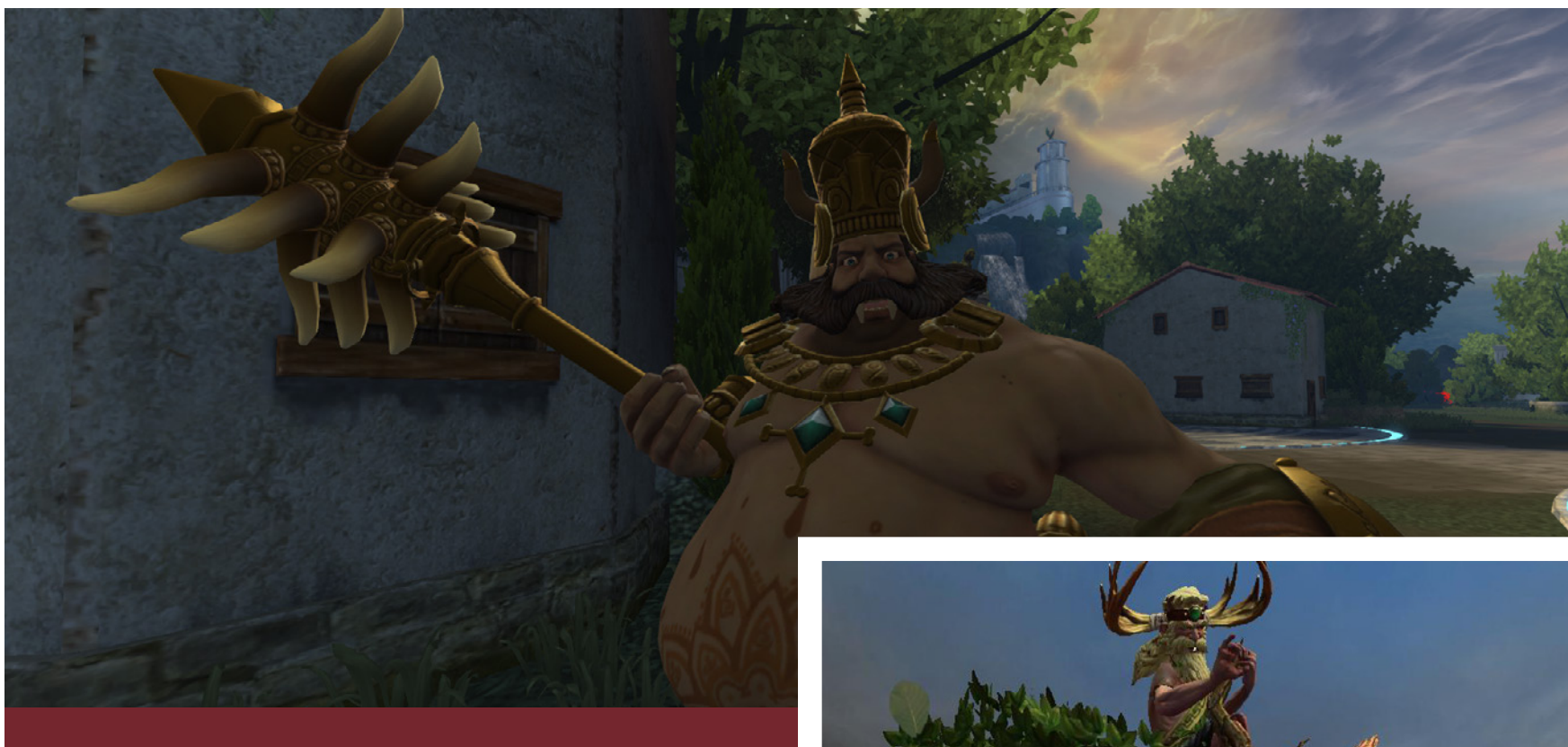
Even before her release, things were already going topsy-turvy for Nox. While it was already announced that the Goddess of Night was going to be released as 'Nox' in the Roman pantheon, many Greek worshipers were of the opinion that her name should have been changed to Nyx because

the name 'Nox' was not as well known. Upon her release, she received mixed to negative reviews on her performances on the battleground. In a world where burst was considered best, Nox, who relied on her continuous low damage poke could not survive long enough to bring down her enemies. She then got slightly reworked; her ultimate received the most

“EVEN BEFORE HER RELEASE, THINGS WERE ALREADY GOING TOPSY-TURVY FOR NOX.”

attention. Damage numbers were increased and suddenly she was considered overpowered. Almost instantly, she became first pick, first ban material. Although she enjoyed success during this period, it was not for long. She recently received a nerf which, coincidentally, also focused on her ultimate. Now, she is considered an average goddess—a deadly one though, in the right hands. One thing is for certain, we salute her tenacity in her time of ups and downs.





BEST DRESSED (STANDARD MODEL)

Winner: Kumbhakarna

In terms of actual clothing, there is little to mention about Kumbhakarna. How did he get the Best Dressed award then? This award is not to celebrate one's physical clothing but to commemorate those who present themselves in the best manner, and that god would be none other than The Sleeping Giant, Kumbhakarna. As his name suggests, he brings an appearance that describes just that, a sleepy-looking giant of a god. On the various maps of war, his towering figure can be seen from afar, striking fear into the other gods. Another reason for Kumbhakarna's victory can be credited to how he represents his pantheon. Hailing from the Hindu pantheon, Kumbhakarna's appearance is instantly recognizable as Hindu. From the various pieces of jewelry to the lotus Henna tattoo on his abdomen, Kumbhakarna is proud of where he comes from and is not afraid to show it. Lastly, while most other gods appear muscular and fit-looking, Kumbhakarna's enormous body size does nothing to diminish his confidence. Even with 'all that bass', he struts around with feelings of indifference.



BEST MALE PERFORMER

Winner: Sylvanus and friends

Ever since his release, Sylvanus and his friends, Grover and his owl, have put out solid performances throughout the year. Although some may argue that, at times, he may have been on his way to being overpowered, Sylvanus would beg to differ. In his opinion, he is balanced and well-rounded and most of his worshipers would agree with that statement. For example, according to Grover, Nature's Grasp, Sylvanus's third ability, is arguably one of the hardest

skillshots to land in SMITE. Most of his damage is also Damage over Time (DoT), which would mean he does not have the burst damage to take down his foes. However, being a Guardian, Sylvanus lives up to his class as being the best released Guardian of the year. Very powerful in terms of CC with two stuns and a knockup, he is not only able to protect his fellow teammates, he is also capable of holding his enemies down for the kills. Due to this, it is no surprise that Sylvanus and friends take home this award.

BEST FEMALE PERFORMER

Winner: Serqet

When her model design was released, people were quick to point out her visual flaws. “She looks too humanoid,” some said. “Her tail looks robotic,” others chimed in. Serqet didn’t let any of these words get her down though. She started out strong on the day of her release, and she let her gameplay do the

talking. Since that day, she has consistently been one of the top picks for the jungler role. Not even her abysmal amount of health could get her down. With the ferocity of a scorpion, she has taken down teams with the combination of her abilities, ultimate, and perseverance. Due to the sheer amount of damage she deals on the battleground, not much can be heard of her nowadays other than the occasional cry of ‘overpowered’. Serqet has also brought to SMITE something fresh. A combination of bubbly happiness (from her voice pack) and large-scale destruction.

Today, Serqet makes her Egyptian colleagues proud as the winner of the Best Female Performer.

To the gods that have lifted their awards on this ceremonious day, congratulations! To those that didn’t, the year ahead promises an even brighter future for you, SMITE and the SMITE Magazine.

Keep your heads high up to the heavens and please, no gathering of worshipers for recounts... ■

By Timothy Tian



SMITE ESPORTS ROUND-UP

~~~~~ By Thomas Shaw ~~~~~

**D**oes it feel like the SMITE World Championship was just two and a half months ago? I know to me it doesn't, the game has just changed so much in such little time. New map, new gods, new items, the whole lot. So much has changed, and it's just the beginning. There's still so much more to come, and with all these changes come the start of tournaments. Qualifiers, Challengers, and the SMITE Pro League,

which will eventually lead onto the Lan events and eventually the next world cup. Today I'll go into detail about what you may of missed if you haven't been watching the games or paying attention to teams.

First, there's all the sponsor changes. Three teams from the SMITE World Championship acquired new sponsors, with COG Prime becoming Cloud 9, COG Red becoming Team SoloMid and SK Gaming becoming the new Fnatic. Meanwhile in the Qualifiers











Complexity became AFK Gaming (formally Melior Morior), Five Angry Men became Denial, and Buster became Enemy eSports.

Then came the start and end of qualifiers last month, and there were a lot of teams that deserved to be in the SPL, but there could only be four from each region to fit in with Titan, Fnatic, Cloud 9 and Team SoloMid. In North America, we saw Cognitive Gaming, Denial eSports, Melior Morior and Enemy eSports all get through to the SPL, with teams like EGR, Polyjuice and Legion being unable to qualify. In Europe, we saw Team Dignitas, Upcoming Stars, TRIG eSports and London Conspiracy get through to the SPL, with teams like Panthera, Spicy Waffles and Pointless being unable to qualify.

With the qualifiers over, we saw a lot of change. We saw some teams completely disband, one of the prime examples being Team Pointless, a promising team that made its mark on the map during the Qualifiers, but after Qualifiers disbanded due to team issues. As well as that we also saw some teams acquire new players; for example, London Conspiracy picked up Aero from Spicy Waffles and benched R3DF00.



Then, finally, we saw drama, with a few accusations being thrown out upon Twitter. After the dust settled, the SPL was quickly upon us, and as saddening as it must have been for some teams to not qualify all

## “WITH THE QUALIFIERS OVER, WE SAW A LOT OF CHANGE. WE SAW SOME TEAMS COMPLETELY DISBAND”

was not lost. There was and still is hope for those who were unable to qualify. They still have a chance to redeem themselves at the Challengers cup.

It will be no easy task though, as both regions have an innumerable amount of teams with good players to fight against. In North America

there's the likes of Legion, EGR, Nomad and many more. Meanwhile in Europe, there are the likes of Panthera, Night's Watch, and EloFishers, to name a few. All of these teams have competitive experience, with a substantial amount of hours put into ranked play. If there was ever a time for a team to work at its best, now is the time.

Now all we can do is wait and watch. What's happened over the last few months doesn't feel like a lot, but it sure was. It's definitely going to be an even more exciting year for SMITE as we progress further into the year, especially with the Summer Split being expanded from 6 to 8 teams. We are going to see a lot of high level competitive play. I'm not sure about you, but I can't wait. ■

*By Thomas Shaw*



**UP-TO-DATE TOURNAMENT INFORMATION**

| Rank | Team              | Record    |
|------|-------------------|-----------|
| 1.   | Team Dignitas     | 2-0 (4-1) |
| 2.   | TSR eSports       | 1-1 (3-2) |
| 3.   | Phatic            | 1-1 (2-2) |
| 3.   | Titus eSports     | 1-1 (2-2) |
| 3.   | London Conspiracy | 1-1 (2-2) |
| 6.   | Upcoming Stars    | 0-2 (0-4) |

**PRO PLAYER GOD STATISTICS**

| God          | Picks    | Wins     | Losses   | Win %     | Kills    | Deaths    |
|--------------|----------|----------|----------|-----------|----------|-----------|
| Sylvanus     | 1        | 1        | 0        | 100       | 0        | 0         |
| Athena       | 1        | 0        | 1        | 0         | 1        | 4         |
| Ares         | 1        | 1        | 0        | 100       | 4        | 1         |
| Ymir         | 1        | 0        | 1        | 0         | 0        | 6         |
| Geb          | 1        | 1        | 0        | 100       | 2        | 0         |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>5</b> | <b>3</b> | <b>2</b> | <b>60</b> | <b>7</b> | <b>20</b> |

**PRO PLAYER INFORMATION**

| Background Information |                  |
|------------------------|------------------|
| Name:                  | Rob Askar        |
| Country of Birth:      | United States 🇺🇸 |
| Birthday:              | July 15, 1998    |
| Competitive            |                  |
| Team:                  | COGnitive Gaming |

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# A THIRD PERSON PERSPECTIVE

~~~~~ By Kris West ~~~~~

As a general rule of thumb, I personally don't stick with a game for all that long. I'm the sort of person who flitters around from game to game, looking for my next fix. My games library surpasses 400 games - my name is Kris, and I am a game junky. But here's the kicker: I have consistently played SMITE for over a year now. This realisation prompted to me look into some of the reasons why Hi-Rez Studios has managed to hold my attention where so many others had let it fall by the wayside.

As soon as I started playing SMITE back in January 2014, I was instantly hooked and I believe that this was because of the control scheme matched with the over-the-shoulder perspective. I had known about

the game for quite a few months prior to playing it, but had never really given it a second thought because, in my mind, I'd tried other MOBAs and never managed to get through an entire match without losing interest.

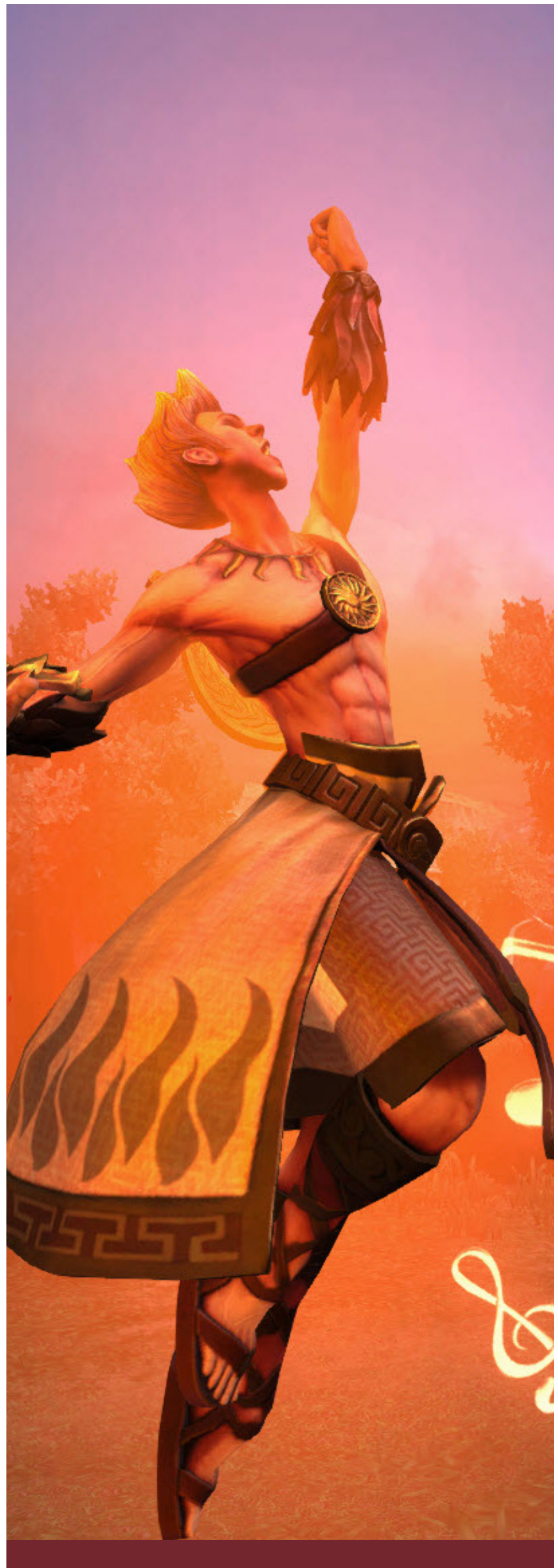
As I'm sure the vast majority of individuals reading this article already know, your god is controlled much like any FPS or MMORPG. Because of this, I felt instantly more at home playing SMITE than any other MOBA I had tried because, instead of looming over the battlefield like some kind of unnatural presence, I was right there in the action. I was a god - I was Thor. It took about three or four games before I was racking up the kills, albeit in Arena. Playing unlocked a long since

forgotten sense of escapism that only the early days of World of Warcraft showed. On my first play session, I lost six hours in the blink of an eye.

The real question is why? After the initial playstyle change, what kept me coming back time and time again? Well, there's a few reasons for this. The first of which is choice. Choice is a very fragile concept and one that is very easy to get wrong. Give a user too much choice and they will get confused; too little, they lose interest. SMITE managed to get this balance near-perfect for me by initially unlocking a small handful of gods for me to experiment with. Because I was just starting out, I was paired with other people starting out who had the same, or similar, selection of gods. This allowed me to very quickly learn how each god worked, and how they interacted with each other.

Along with the choice of gods, I had a choice of three game modes: Conquest, Joust, and Arena. I think one of things that put me off playing other MOBAs was the meta-heavy three-laned map where I had to sink 45-60 minutes into a match, and not really learn anything. With SMITE, I religiously played Arena for my first 100-200 games, and absolutely loved it. Playing Arena allowed me to further learn the mechanics of the game, and slowly turn off auto-ability and auto-buy, before progressing into the other, more strategic, game modes.

It all led back to this feeling of choice and how I controlled what I wanted to do, rather than being shoehorned into a game mode with a huge selection of characters I knew nothing about. This leads me quite nicely onto my next point - the characters. Each and every playable character in SMITE is a mythological being. They really 'existed', and with a simple Google search, I could find out reams and reams of information about any single one of them. This was hugely appealing to me because it meant I could relate a lot more



to the god I was playing as, which further pushed my escapism. As I said at the start of this - I was Thor. I was wielding Mjolnir, and anyone that dared defy me would be getting a swift reckoning.

What do we have so far that keeps me hooked? The control scheme is familiar, I am directly controlling my character's movement, I am roleplaying a god, and I was given the perfect amount of choice. There is, however, one more aspect that solidified my journey down the rabbit hole that is SMITE. Mastery levels.

I'm not entirely sure why, but for me to play a game, I need to feel like I am accomplishing something. I find it quite difficult to play through single-player games nowadays because I get nothing out of them except the story. Other multiplayer games have lost my interest because there's no character progression, or my account doesn't level up in some regard. In SMITE, each god has their own mastery

level and you can level them up to rank 10. Now, this rank doesn't actually change anything, but it does unlock a few skins for you to use on them. To most people, this may seem fairly meaningless, but for me, just knowing that my games are actually 'feeding' something makes each and every game, win or lose, worthwhile. I have been playing for a year and have only managed to get one god, Ra, to rank 10. It takes a lot of time, and a lot of games. Unfortunately, once I hit rank 10 with Ra, I stopped playing him quite as much, but it didn't really matter, because I moved onto another of the 60+ gods to choose from!

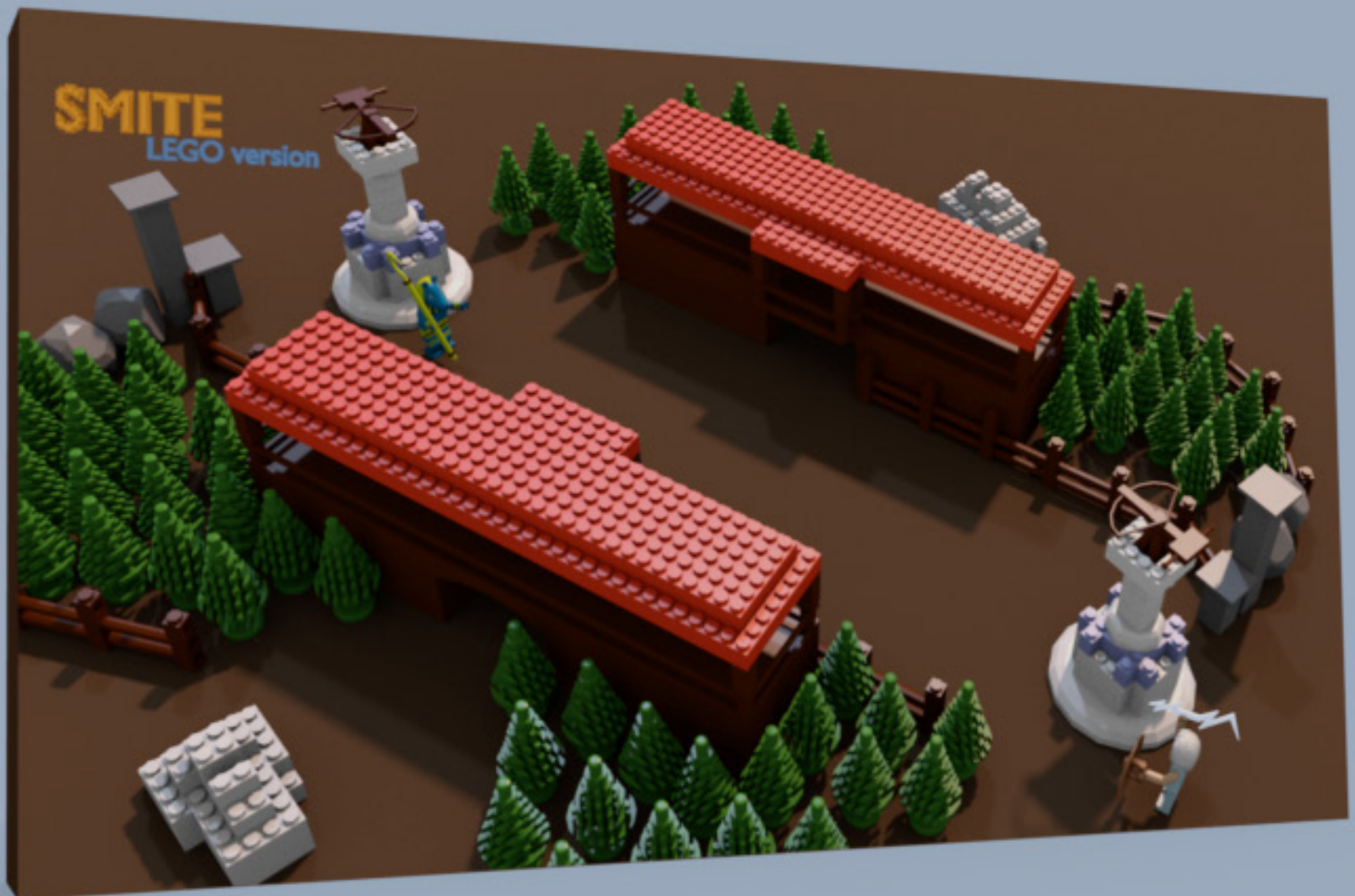
So one year on, and how am I getting on? I play it the same, if not more, than when I originally started playing! If I were an Xbox One player, I'd be keeping a keen eye on the marketplace for when SMITE enters open beta! ■

By Kris West





Artwork by Asim Shrestha



GOD RE-ENVISIONED: MAGE LOKI

By Jorg van der Velden

Yet again, we find an Assassin transformed into something different, something esoteric, something bursting with magical prowess. And it's not just any Assassin, it's the grandfather of everyone sneaky and the bane of every god that has less health than a mountain: Loki. But this is not just any re-envisioning of a kit, it's a grim tale of an ambiguous god fully falling from grace and being punished for his actions.

Loki is one of the most popular Norse deities in modern day, but there is surprisingly little known about his actual role in the pantheon we all know. He appears in many myths, sometimes aiding the Aesir (the official name of the Norse Gods), sometimes foiling them, and always in a different guise or purpose than in the previous tale. There are few of these myths that he can call his own, where his actions are the focal point and not as supporting cast to the other deities. But they are there, and the most well known one is a dark

story indeed: the tale of Loki antagonizing the Aesir too much and the punishment for his foul words.

The poem Lokasedda (Loki's quarrel), from the Poetic Edda, is the official name of this grim tale and starts with Loki flyting (a contest of poetically exchanging insults) with a number of gods, putting forth multiple stanzas of insults with just a single one as a reply and multiple gods need to step in to keep the challenge going. He eventually kills a servant, as a result of a claim by one of the gods he could not abide by, and is chased out of the hall.





Out in the woods he encounters another servant and demands to know what the gods are talking about in the hall. The servant replies that they're talking about weapons and their prowess in war. Loki claims he will have the gods fighting before the end of the night and steps into the hall. As soon as he is noticed, all the gods fall silent.

The trickster god breaks the silence by rudely demanding he be seated and served. He ignores the response of Bragi, which was greatly insulting, and forces Odin to seat him by calling on their kinship from aeons ago, when they were like brothers. From the moment he's seated Loki replies to every remark with a harsh insult, claiming scandalous behavior or recalling shameful events from that deity's past. This verbal fencing match rises to a peak when Thor enters, raging and threatening to kill Loki if he doesn't cease his taunting and leaves the hall. Like a proper troll, Loki feeds this rage with insult after insult, only leaving when Thor is at the brink of putting action to his words.

Fearful of the wrath of the Aesir, Loki changes

himself into a salmon and hides in the waterfall called Franangrsfors. This is in vain, as the other gods catch him and bind him with the entrails of his son Nari, imprisoning him until the end of times. To complete the punishment even further, a snake is placed over his head, constantly dripping venom onto him. In an attempt to ease Loki's punishment, his wife Sygin holds a bowl over his head to catch the poison. However, the bowl needs to be emptied from time to time, and while Sygin leaves to empty it, the venom flows freely. The immense pain from the toxin dripping onto his head is so intense, it makes Loki writhe violently enough to shake the entire earth, causing earthquakes everywhere.

But the master of taunts escaped from his bonds, and Ragnarok is at hand. He wanders the halls of Asgard with a single goal: punishing the Aesir.

As this is a grim and painful tale, his abilities need to have this same dark edge to them. What better role than the Mage, who isn't limited by the physical world to exact this revenge.

| Name | Type | Description |
|-------------------------|----------|--|
| Words of Acid | Passive | Each time an enemy god is hit by one of Loki's abilities, he gains one stack of insult. After collecting X stacks, Loki's next basic attack taunts for 0.5 seconds. |
| Escape of the Trickster | Active 1 | Loki and allies in a radius around him all look like old crones, making them indistinguishable from each other. Duration and number of allies increases with each level, to a maximum of 3 allies and 4 seconds at max rank. |
| Prison of Entrails | Active 2 | Loki throws a ball of his son's entrails, which erupt on impact. The entrails lash out within the area and damage and root the enemies hit. |
| Bowl of Poison | Active 3 | Loki throws out a bowl of poison collected from the serpent that tortured him for so long, hitting all enemies in an almost rectangular cone in front of him. Those hit take a large amount of damage and have a small DoT placed on them. |
| Serpent of Ragnarok | Ultimate | Loki voluntarily binds himself and lets the snake drip venom onto his head, causing massive quaking in a large area around him. Enemies in the area take damage every second for as long as Loki channels this ability and are trembled. With every tick of Serpent of Ragnarok Loki takes a small percentage of his maximum health as damage. |

Each ability is part of the story, and nothing is as important as the beginning of a tale. 'Words of Acid', Loki's passive, is the beginning of his end and depicts him flyting and taunting the other Norse gods. Every time an enemy god is hit by one of Loki's abilities, he gains a stack of taunt. As soon as he reaches a set amount of stacks, his next basic attack taunts the first enemy hit for 0.5 seconds. This is similar to Agni's passive, as stacking over the amount required does nothing to increase the effectiveness and duration of the taunt. It's also important to remember that this is the next basic attack, and not the next basic attack that hits. This is an amazing tool to interrupt enemies that are channeling abilities or attacking you, allowing you to use that tiny window to set up for a counterattack or to escape from harm. Timing and actually hitting the attack can be difficult though, as the timeframe you have to interrupt the enemy tends to be relatively short (with a few notable exceptions).

After pushing the Aesir to their limits, Thor

especially, Loki decides to make a tactical retreat and hides himself by blending in with the natural surroundings. It's hard to imagine a salmon flopping around on the battlefield of the gods, so I had to draw upon another legend. In this legend Loki disguises himself as an old crone and refuses to mourn the dead god Baldr, forcing him to remain in the underworld. Combining these two, Loki turns himself and up to three allies at max rank into elderly women, making them indistinguishable from each other by using 'Escape of the Trickster'. Loki and his allies still have full access to all their abilities and attacks, but using those would betray who is who. This form of deception opens up many options and makes confusing the enemy a breeze. Three identical crones running out of the jungle, not knowing who is who or what their capabilities are, immediately sets the enemy on the back foot. Even with everyone in vision, it's easy to lose track of which crone is which god, and makes communicating who is the target



Artwork by Michele Trocchia





extremely hard for the enemy team. This ability offers a lot of utility, both offensively and defensively.

Loki gets caught, however, and the gods bind him in place with the entrails of his son. These 'chains' are strong enough to ensure Loki does not escape and has no choice but to undergo his punishment. After his escape, he brings these bindings along to use upon those who dare to oppose him, binding them with the same humiliating shackles. 'Prison of Entrails' is Loki's second ability, and allows him to damage and root enemies in a small AoE (area of effect). The range of this ability is mediocre at best, but allows for an effective CC (crowd control) chain with his passive to set up for damage from his other abilities, or for allies to come in and assist. The damage on this ability is small enough to not make this his main damaging ability, but at the same time is significant enough to pose a threat to the enemy, especially those fleeing from him.

It wasn't enough to just imprison the Trickster - a serpent dripping with venom was placed over his head to complete the punishment. This poison was

so potent that it made Loki writhe violently in pain when it hit him. His wife, Sygin, didn't want to see her husband suffer, and held a bowl over his head to catch the dripping poison. 'Bowl of Poison', the third ability in Loki's arsenal, is him carrying this caustic liquid to battle to use against those he wishes to exact his revenge on. This is his main source of damage and wave clear, dealing a fair amount of damage on impact, with a small DoT (damage over time) effect lingering as the venom slowly bites into the victim's flesh. It hits in a somewhat rectangular area in front of him, similar to Apollo's 'So Beautiful'. The only difference is that it's slightly narrower right in front of him, and slightly wider at the end as he throws the liquid in front of him.

The bowl isn't endless, and needs to be emptied from time to time. So while Sygin was away, the poison dripped freely onto Loki's head and, as I mentioned before, was so painful he writhed violently. His throes were so intense that the entire earth shook, causing earthquakes all over the world. Loki voluntarily relives these painful moments



when he activates 'Serpent of Ragnarok', willingly binding and subjecting himself to the potent venom. A large area around him starts quaking viciously, dealing a large amount of damage with each tick and trembling each enemy caught in the area. For as long as this ability is channeled, Loki takes a small percentage of his maximum health in damage as the poison burns and scars his flesh. This is a very high risk, high reward ability, as not only does it do damage while channeling, it also roots you in place and you're unable to perform any other action. The damage and CC are devastating, to say the least, and can turn a fight, secure a kill or aid an ally in escaping. It requires good tactical insight and positioning to use 'Serpent of Ragnarok' to it's maximum efficiency, but the power and control are more than worth the effort and risk.

Mage Loki is a burst Mage through and through, maintaining the amazing burst potential his current incarnation has. But he offers a lot more control during the various phases of the game and has excellent wave clear with both 'Prison of Entrails' and 'Bowl of Poison', making him an ideal candidate for the mid lane. The Jungler comes by frequently to contest the mid camps or just to gank the lane, making it worth your while to spend an early point in 'Escape of the Trickster'. This also helps with rotations to the other lanes, disguising any allies he picks up along the way for maximum confusion as the fight commences. During teamfights his role will mostly be that of Magical nuker, though he can quickly take a control oriented approach if the team is in dire need of CC.

Here ends the story of Loki's imprisonment, and this magical reincarnation of the mysterious Trickster now roams the battlegrounds, out for blood and punishment. ■

By Jorg van der Velden

IN THE BODY OF...

By Ashley Eaton-Jephcote

He begins to travel throughout his surroundings, making sure all is in order. Besides, that's what he is here for. Control is kept with the element he wields. Something then flickers within his vision. A glistening body high in the sky emits shards everywhere in sight, into the being himself. The figure above requests his name, he replies simply with a smirk, ready to inflict destruction as a return gift."

Glistening above, it was she who had raised her body into the air, calling upon the element of fire to aid her. It is she who is supposed to cover and care for the lands which the mortals dwell in, as they are all her responsibility, her creations. Resembling a true motherly figure, her skin was luxuriously smooth. Her figure had curves that related to a glamorous female, but not entirely engulfed in beauty itself. A simple piece of cloth kept her decency, for portraying indecency and desire were not to be had during her duties. Her hair was so complexly put together, yet so natural, almost like an effortless

flick of her elegant hands created the assortment

Actively vigilant, a moment was taken to observe her surroundings. As the fire element that was summoned had left all beings of evil smouldered, it allowed the goddess to breathe. The essence of her being able to methodically control herself was being demonstrated here, as her moment of re-evaluation had exposed the same result of many a time. The will to take a moment to simply inhale and exhale during the hastiest times of battle will allow the mind to unwind. From there, she can return back into her duty. Glancing around, she decides to take to the ground, and scout the nearby stretch of land for any surprises.

Gently revolving around her, the elemental stones glowed. She had reached the ground level, barely hovering above the earth when the reaction of the stones begun. Almost as if they had separate minds, the stones were like instincts within the goddess, their luminous auras intensifying whenever that particular element may be of utmost importance. Having just been drafted into the goddess' actions, the mystic fire





stone hovered with less offensive intentions, quite the contrast to the other elements. The aroma of the charred grass was still around, but this did not lessen the fire's readiness to be called upon again.

Startled upon reaching ground level, the earth elemental stone revolved round towards her shoulder. Surveying the wide expanse of the land before herself was not going to be an easy task, especially with the copious amounts of vile souls trying to annihilate her creations. Calling upon the

“LIKE THAT OF A POTTERY HOUSEHOLD, THE SMELL OF ALL SORTS OF CLAY WAS AROUND: UNUSED, DAMP, AND DRYING, AND THE DEEP SMELL OF THE FURNACE AT WORK TOO.”

earth, it was the clay soldiers that would assist the goddess in her duty of protection. The stench of the quickly made up, temporary structures was overwhelming. Like that of a pottery household, the smell of all sorts of clay was around: unused, damp, and drying, and the deep smell of the furnace at work too. Mixed with the many earthly

organisms uprooted with the rise of the soldiers, they promptly split up and took to assisting her.

Instinctively, the goddess spun round and shattered one of the surveying soldiers. The echoing sound of shattered clay resembled that of little teapots being strewn across the floor in a small china shop, and the smell of various clays and earths returned. Metal element at the ready again, she could tell something just wasn't right. Why would one of the soldiers be startled over a charred piece of grass? An epiphany had dawned; the embers was not a result of the fire element earlier called upon, but of another being.

Spiralling back round to her original point of view, her intuition led to enveloping herself in a fog as to evade the now apparent danger. A male figure stood before her, smirking cunningly. He began to fold his arms, leaning back as if he was at ease with the situation. Flames were engulfing him physically, and appeared to have an aura of eeriness. The being before the goddess demanded her name, in reply to her earlier request whilst in the sky. Friend or Foe? She hadn't the time to decide, she replied in a serene tone, to not anger her newly encounter.

Nu Wa. ■

By Ashley Eaton-Jephcote

AGAINST THE GRAIN #1: AGNI: THE BRUISER

By Jacob Crawford

Against the grain implies doing things that aren't quite natural, or contrary to popular belief. So obviously we must delve into itemization and skill combinations that are not thought of as being necessarily good if we speak of going against SMITE's grain, that is to say against the 'META.' This is Against The Grain, where I do my best to show you the strange and bizarre, while also showing it can be viable in higher level gameplay.



In most cases, Agni is not (and generally should not) be thought of as being viable as a bruiser.

There are, however, situations where you should consider it, as well as new items to look into. The specific situation for the Agni Bruiser is when you have enough burst damage from other teammates along with an enemy composition that is dripping CC from every one of their pixelated pores. During the closed beta, it was actually fairly normal to see most mages sporting at least one defensive item in their builds. As old items were redesigned along with new items being introduced, the standard mage model fell almost exclusively to glass cannon. Agni requires a few things to be viable in my opinion - he needs some measure of CDR (Cool Down Reduction), and a survivability mechanism. With the traditional glass cannon build, you'll grab Shoes of Focus along with Chronos Pendant or Breastplate of Valor for the CDR, and then grab Greater Purification Beads or one of the Aegis actives for survival. That being said, with the proper item synergies, a bruiser Agni can actually become a fairly disgusting force to fight against, especially in the narrow jungle paths.

Agni's lack of control in his base kit is the most obvious reason why people don't enjoy playing him in a bruiser role. To make a successful bruiser, you

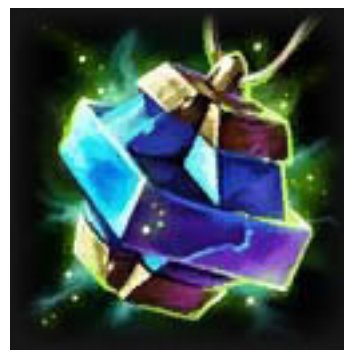


need to not only be able to survive as a secondary tank, you need to control the battlefield through damage and CC (Crowd Control) abilities. This is why gods such as Hercules, Osiris, and Cabrakan make for great bruisers. This means to make a successful Agni Bruiser, you must supplement him with items and then utilize him properly. Agni is nothing without his damage, so you really need to focus on items that push his power, but you also need to get maximum CDR. Regardless of how you build Agni, he always needs to be able to spam his attacks.

THE ITEMS

My item build is half standard, half unconventional. Your end build will be Pythagorem's Piece, Shoes of Focus, Warlock's Sash, Spirit Robe, Gem of Isolation, and Rod of Tahuti. As for a starter item, you can either do a standard Warlock's Sash and Tiny Trinket, or Rush Pythagorem's Piece to second tier, and grab a few blue potions. Each item is linked to the overall build, and synergizes with not only Agni, but other items as well.

PYTHAGOREM'S PIECE

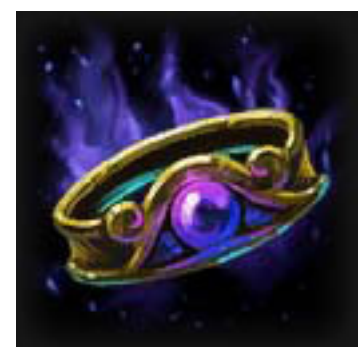


With season 2, Pythagorem's Piece received a significant buff; with the addition of 10% CDR. This means the item is finally viable outside of our

beloved noodle. This item provides an aura buff for you and allies, as well as the 10% CDR. Agni loves power, but he loves CDR more than anything. If the match continues, you might want to switch this out for a penetration item like Void Stone.

WARLOCK'S SASH

Warlock's Sash is a good item on Agni regardless, but the synergy between Sash and Spirit Robe is the focus for today.



SPIRIT ROBE

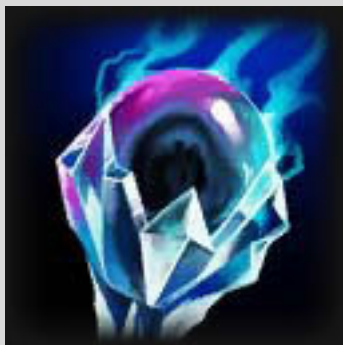


An unconventional item, but the reason it works is because of the solid defense stats, the passive, and the juicy 15% CDR. This item, Along with Pythagorem's

Piece and Shoes of Focus, push your CDR to the cap of 40% CDR. It also compliments the Warlock's Sash, working to effectively double the damage necessary to kill you. It's fairly impressive how only 40 protections can double the damage it takes to kill Agni.

GEM OF ISOLATION

This can be a bit unconventional as your situational item instead of penetration. Going with the bruiser build, you want to be pushing out more



control than anything, and Gem of Isolation is the best item to do that. Since Gem works with every single one of Agni's abilities, this means Agni brings a total of 6 CC attacks, including all 3 stacks of his ultimate. This allows your team to do more damage, or forces the enemy to disengage.

GREATER BLINK



No, I did not mix my actives up. I say grab Greater Blink on Agni with this build. By building a tankier Agni, you can effectively be a secondary initiator. Use blink as a Tyr would, Blink

behind people, drop your flame wave, and then dash through them to safety. You'll be softening the entire group up for your team while remaining relatively safe, as well as slowing them down with your Gem.

THE GAMEPLAY

I like to play Agni in the mid lane, but he can also work in the solo lane provided it isn't Chang'e or another god with anti-healing. Your early game will be very familiar. Just sit and farm, while letting your lifesteal heal you. As your ultimate comes up, use it to poke the enemy to keep him on his toes. The middle game is when you start getting into your role. The moment you get the Spirit Robe up, you'll become extremely hard to kill. With the clever use of your skills to slow and stun chasing enemies, Agni is one of the hardest gods to pin down. Gem of Isolation allows a new gameplay element to enter, that of setting down your Noxious Fumes to either force a jump, or slowing the enemy down significantly. During 1v1 engagements, there is little to no chance the enemy will be able to actually kill you. In fact you'll usually kill them, especially if you get the Active Shield of the Underworld or Shell of Absorption. Survival is assured by grabbing the plethora of HP rich and anti-CC items, so it's not essential to grab beads for the most part.

Without Gem of Isolation, Agni has only one form of crowd control, and that's the one second stun from his Noxious Fumes after being ignited by one of his other skills. Other than that Agni is purely damage with zero utility. By grabbing Gem of Isolation, you gain another form of crowd control that you can constantly keep on your target thanks to all four of Agni's abilities dealing damage. Usually, Agni's Path of flames should be kept as an escape, but with the introduction of Greater Blink, you can use this skill along with noxious fumes to do some

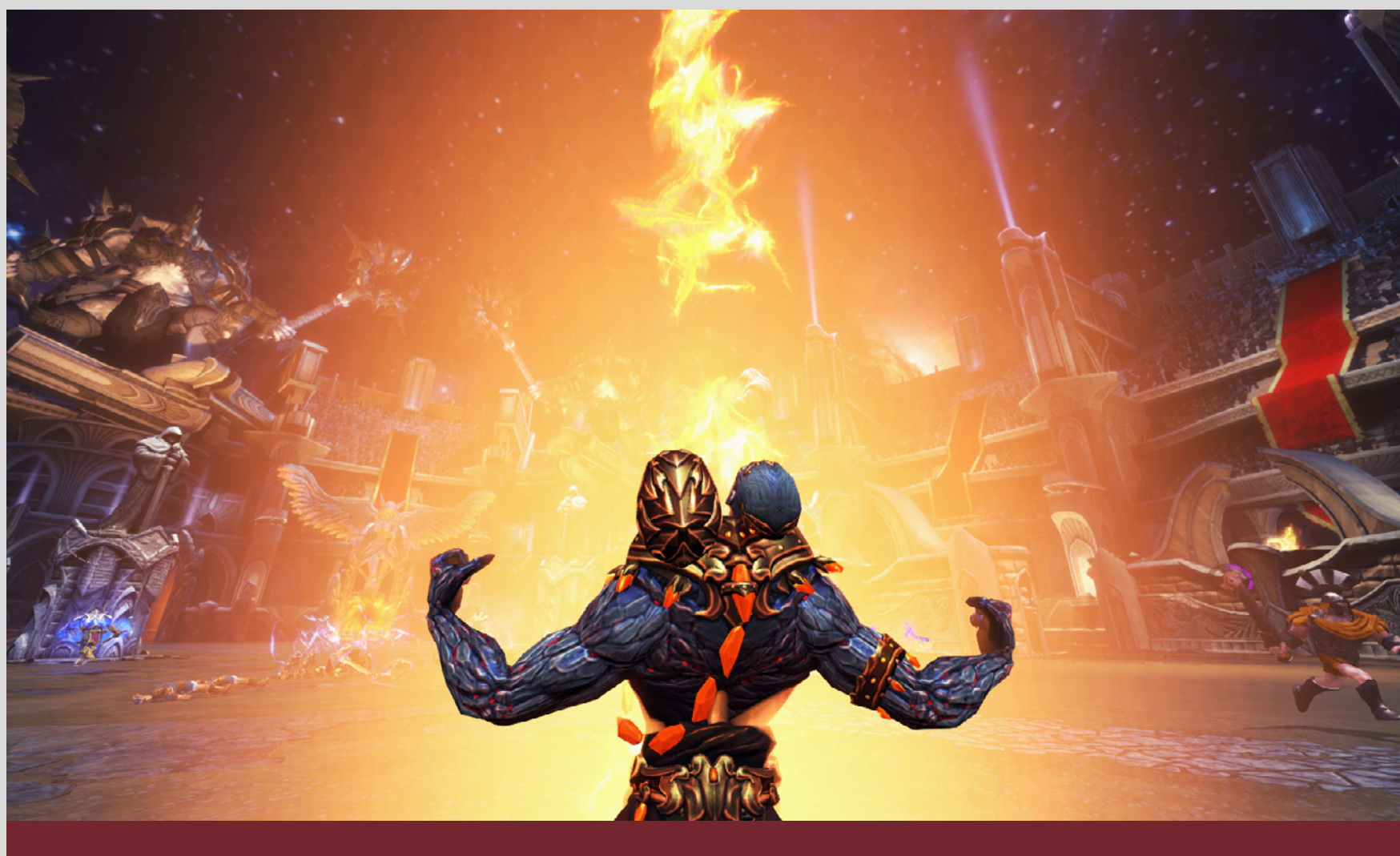
serious damage. I would only recommend doing this when you have an ally with heavy CC at your back or against a single enemy. Blink behind the enemy, lay down Noxious Fumes, and dash straight into them. This guarantees you a minimum of eight ticks from your Path of Flames. If it's in a favorable situation, you can disregard the blink and get in front of their escape path to ensure the kill. My favorite kill combo with Agni is Noxious Fumes, Path of Flames, Rain Fire, Flame Wave, and Rain Fire. Fun fact, if you release an ultimate and immediately switch to Flame Wave, both abilities will hit at the same time. This means a large chunk will magically disappear from the enemies' health bar, usually resulting in panic.

During team fights, you should focus on laying down control more than damage. If you see three or more enemies clustered, you should use your ult. Drop your Noxious Fumes on top of a potential escape route, but don't light it. Blink behind the enemy and dash through them to safety in order to lay down initial damage and slow them. Save your

ultimate for clustered enemies, and drop Flame Wave on gods that get a little too close. The list goes on, but the main point is to help control the fight from the back and seal off escapes, while your support is in the front and soaking the damage. Tempt the enemy into thinking you're an easy kill because you used your dash, pulling focus from the squishy gods to you. After all, it isn't about killing in conquest, it's about securing objectives.

No matter what build you end up using, remember that Agni is there to be a long range bombardier. Your favorite ground should be towards the back of the fight to make the enemy think twice about engaging. An Agni in the back line is a huge intimidation factor, just like an Anubis or Poseidon. Agni quite literally sets the line (with his taunt) as to what the enemy should and shouldn't do in a team fight. If the enemy chooses to ignore it, you end up with grade 'A' SMITE BBQ. ■

By Jacob Crawford





WHAT IS SIEGE?

~~~~~ By Derrick Moody ~~~~~





**D**eep in the South American jungles, there is a war that is waging amongst the gods. Choose your side in this four versus four, tower-pushing game mode.

Siege was released in its early stages as a five versus five, very fast paced, tower-pushing gamemode during the Spring of 2014. Soon it underwent multiple changes, such as smaller teams, jungle camp changes, and visual improvements. It has been almost a year since its release and it has been commended for its design and gameplay aspects by IGN and the SMITE community itself. Here's to hoping that Siege continues down its path of success!

You start the game as one of four players, either solo queueing or with a group, up to you and three other players. Your starting level is 3 and your starting gold is 2000. Every time you kill an

enemy minion, jungle camp, or enemy god, you get points that when reached 100 points, you get a siege minion. Killing a minion is one point, killing an enemy god is five points, and killing a jungle camp is nine points. Another way to get a siege minion is to kill the Siege Juggernaut camp in the center of the map. When either the Siege Juggernaut camp is killed or your team has acquired 100 points, the Siege Minion will go either into the left or right lanes to help your team push towers. There is a portal facing the fountain that you can use to teleport to the furthest of the two possible Siege Minions you may have available. The Siege Minion is very powerful and tanky, and can push enemy towers very quickly, so it's in your team's best interest to attack when it is in lane. Remember that the enemy team can also get Siege Minions as well, and you must be ready



to defend your towers and other friendly objectives against it. Another thing to note is when a Siege Minion dies, it spawns two archer minions. Remembering this can help you when pushing a lane or to stop enemies from taking advantage of potential pushing when their Siege Minion dies.

When rotating to other lanes through the jungle, you must be careful. At the beginning of the match, before the minions spawn, there is a ample amount of time that your team or the enemy team can rotate over to you jungle and start a fight. If you are wary in this situation of being caught or wanting to catch enemy players, buying a ward beforehand is an excellent choice. Note that normal wards that cost 50 gold and the active Eye of Providence are disabled for purchase in Siege but sentry wards are able for purchase at 135 gold. You can buy one of these special wards at a time and it can detect other wards that the enemy may place down, so be wary of when and where you place your wards.

## GOOD GODS FOR SIEGE

### JANUS

Janus's portal abilities help him and his team mates quickly get around the map. This can help with split-pushing enemy towers or to kill the Siege Juggernaut in a timely manner. Not only that, but because the Siege jungle has many narrow paths, his large and powerful scaling abilities are perfect for killing enemy gods or defend against them.







## LOKI

With his stealth ability and increased movement speed, Loki is an asset when playing on this winding map. Because the jungle is so narrow and hard to maneuver in and is difficult to ward as well, Loki shines bright with his increased potential to gank enemy gods. He also has good split-push potential as well with him being able to use his decoy to tank tower shots while he can attack the tower.

## CHAAC

As with Janus's large abilities, it is the same with Chaac. Chaac's ability to control a team fight

at any place on the map is extraordinary. His ultimate can set up for Siege Juggernaut kills as well as defending against steals. Also, he can use his slowing abilities and ultimate are large enough to section off enemy gods.. His natural tankiness is also an asset when you need someone to tank tower shots while another allied god with a higher damage output attacks with you.

Hopefully this information will be useful to you the next time you play Siege. You can use this information as a base to improve upon. Do your own research on Siege and see what you come up with! In whatever you do, I hope you enjoy yourselves and VVGF! ■

*By Derrick Moody*



# DIARY OF... A SUPPORT PLAYER

By Ralph Babunga

*Yet again, we find an Assassin transformed into something different, something esoteric, something bursting with magical prowess. And it's not just any Assassin, it's the grandfather of everyone sneaky and the bane of every god that has less health than a mountain: Loki. But this is not just any re-envisioning of a kit, it's a grim tale of an ambiguous god fully falling from grace and being punished for his actions.*

## Order

ADC: Cupid

Support: Geb

Mid: Poseidon

Solo: Chaac

Jungle: Thor

## Chaos

ADC: Artemis

Support: Athena

Mid: Poseidon

Solo: Hercules

Jungle: Bastet

Dear Diary,

(-01:20) VVGH. Opening the shop, it's time to decide on a beginning build. Hand of the Gods is easy to decide on. Watcher's Gift or Mark of the Vanguard? I know I need a Ward, so I'll grab that. I think I want the gold spooling from Watcher's Gift, especially now that its passive triggers on Jungle Camps. Okay. Let's go!

(-00:45) Place Ward on enemy side and immediately back. Why are they pinging me in the base? Buy 4 Health and 3 Mana Potions. To the Damage Buff Camp. WVE, guys!

(00:00--Minions have Spawned) Jump party around jungle camp! Oh, Poseidon told me not to HoG the camp. Okay, I won't!







(00:10) Damage Buff Camp cleared, on to Attack Speed Camp with Cupid! Used my Hand of the Gods and Shock Wave to clear the small camp minions. Finish camp (level up, yay!) and head towards lane. Artemis and Athena just finished, too, and are on their way.

(00:40) Laning phase! Athena and I are watching as Cupid and Artemis clear. Shock Wave is used every now and then to help mop up--have to help a baby out, after all--and I only get a couple last hits! Levels three and four come without incident.

(04:10) I've tried to go help mid a couple times so far, but Athena has stayed in lane and pushed forward. Have to help Cupid. Well-timed shields have prevented any deaths in our lane, but Cupid has to go back to base. I'm close to level five; Cupid hit five last wave. Artemis used her ultimate when she got it, and we barely avoided giving a kill.

(04:55) Cupid came back to lane, I used the last of my potions to give us a fighting chance. We attacked. I used Roll Out to knock Athena away, then immediately used Cataclysm on the very surprised Artemis. Cupid cast Fields of Love and then hit her with a Heart Bomb. Cupid secured the kill with a couple more auto-attacks, and I used Shockwave to keep Athena out of the fight.

(07:15) After purchasing some much-needed items, I'm rotating between middle lane and long lane, trying to take some pressure off of our Poseidon while keeping Cupid alive.

The Poseidon mirror match has gone as well as you could expect: Krakens have been released, Whirlpools have eradicated waves, and Tidal Surges have cleaned up anything that might have washed ashore. Thor and Bastet have both been seen in mid several times. Securing mid camps has helped me stay a half level ahead of Athena.







[08:47] The enemy team was doing Gold Fury! They took out my Ward and I could hear them doing it through the wall. Well, I blinked in and used Cataclysm, stunning three of their team. Then I used my Wrath of the Gods and got the kill on the Gold Fury. My team was so excited!

[09:23] Cupid was killed while pushing the tier one tower. He blamed me, because our ward coverage had expired. I replaced the wards and settled back into lane.

[11:37] We killed Poseidon! You know, their Poseidon. They tried to push our middle tower down, but Thor and I closed in from each side and caught Poseidon out of position.

[11:45] Cupid died again. He said I needed to get back to lane and support him.

[16:12] Sorry for the gap in the entries, but we took the long lane tier one tower! It got us a pair of kills, too, as we wiped out the enemy Athena and

Artemis. We then were able to clinch a Gold Fury without contest. Still no word from the Solo lane...

[17:25] We just fought at Fire Giant. Our first true team fight! We were able to get an early kill on their Bastet, but it cost us Poseidon (and his Kraken). Thanks to a well-timed Storm Call from our Chaac we killed their Poseidon and Hercules, although his last-second Excavate put Cupid in dangerous territory. Cupid was quickly able to pick off Artemis with his auto-attacks, which healed him back up out of the yellow. Athena retreated, and we were able to take Fire Giant without further trouble.

[21:06] All enemy towers destroyed. We march now on to Olympus. VEW!

[24:15] We have slain the long lane's Phoenix.

[24:30] Olympus has fallen. In the end, they could not hold out against our late-game push, fueled by that Fire Giant. WGG all around! ■

*By Ralph Babunga*









# OFFICE GODS: GABE, THE SWOLE DAPPER MAN

~~~~~ By Allison Panagis & Anthony Badalamenti ~~~~~

Where would SMITE be without its Press Relations Specialist? The answer is quite simple: literally nowhere. If not for one man, we would not all be playing the action-packed game we know and love. Reddit would be bereft of in-depth, healthy conversations about the balance of gods and goddesses. Without him, SMITE would not be the first MOBA to venture onto a console platform. While his official name is HiRezGabe, this man is known simply as Gabe. One may know him from

the historic “Gabe Said So” sale from last June. What other Hi-Rez member gets a sale simply because they said so? No one, that’s who. Behind the modest name is a boisterous, organized spirit who knows how to get the job done and do it in style.

Gabe, the Press Relations Specialist, enters the battleground of the gods as a flashy, masterful Warrior. Over the years he has garnered all the tools for success in battle and all who stand against him should be wary of crossing his path.

| Name | Type | Description |
|--------------------------------|----------|---|
| Sale | Passive | Gabe's team gets 10/20/30/40% reduction on item prices. Gabe gets double this discount, because his team needs to know where they belong - below him. |
| Crowd Surfing | Active 1 | Gabe leaps forwards into the air and if he lands on an enemy god he can leap again to another enemy god until there are no more available targets to surf across. Anyone between his targets take damage based on how many times he has surfed. |
| I'm Hungry | Active 2 | Turns minions into food. Eats food. Gabe gains stacking and short term buffs as the game progresses. The amount of minions transformed also goes up as Gabe levels. The buffs start out as just a health boost that stacks with each minion devoured, and ends with short term boosts to his stats and movement speed as the game progresses. |
| The Suit | Active 3 | Gabe puts on his suit, buffing all his stats and dazzling anyone who is standing too close. |
| PR Specialist,
M*****F***** | Ultimate | He makes his team look SO GOOD that the enemy team gives up, dying because they've lost all hope. |

Gabe has a very unique role in the game; being in the business of Press Relations means his job is to make his team, and himself, look good above all else. While his real life kit is even better than this underpowered in-game kit, we believe it is more than enough to show off his skills.

Gabe sweet talks the sales person for the gods to get his team a steep discount on item prices with his Passive, "Sale", while getting this reduction doubled for himself since he is the one doing all the work and deserves at least a little recognition for it. This gives his team the ability to stay ahead of the enemy team by buying their items quicker, allowing them to have more cooldown reduction, damage, and/or defense than the other team earlier in the game.

With "Crowd Surfing" Gabe jumps forward, and if he lands on an enemy god he will jump in the direction he is facing once more. If on the second bounce he lands on an enemy god or minion he will continue on until he jumps and does not land on

an enemy. Enemies that he lands on take damage, and any enemy between his jumps take a small portion of that damage. This allows Gabe to quickly engage or escape through enemies if he can land it, or jump out of the way of an enemy skill shot.

Gabe is almost always hungry, so much so that if you were to offer him some of your fries one of two things would happen: either Gabe would become your best friend in the whole wide world, or he would accidentally bite your hand off in the haste of getting to the offered food! Luckily Hi-Rez finally found a way around this by giving him the ability to transform minions and small monsters into grub for him, the amount he can transform at once going up as he levels. After transforming his targets into food he quickly devours them, gaining buffs that vary upon his level. These buffs start out low, with a stacking health bonus, and grow into stronger buffs that range from a short bonus to movement speed and damage buffs.



If you have ever seen Gabe in a suit you know just how goddamn amazing he looks in it, and there is a good reason for that. Gabe's suit is endowed with dazzling powers. When Gabe dons it in the field it mesmerises any enemy god, minion, or monster standing too close, while also buffing all of his stats. Whenever Gabe is in a suit you know he is about to teach you a lesson you won't soon forget.

The best thing that Gabe has in his arsenal is to not only make something look amazing, but also the ability to make something else look horrible in comparison. When he activates his Ultimate, "PR Specialist, M*****F*****" the enemy team is so upset with themselves being so pathetic that they perish on the spot. These deaths do not count for or against either team, but the enemy gods must still sit through the respawn timer. This gives Gabe's team more than enough time to get shit done, or else he'll have to turn his powers on them for making him look bad!

Gabe, undoubtedly the most special of all the PR Specialists out there, has the innate capability to do amazing things for himself and for his team. Should you dare to cross him, though, you'll end up wishing you were on his side. ■

By Allison Panagis & Anthony Badalamenti



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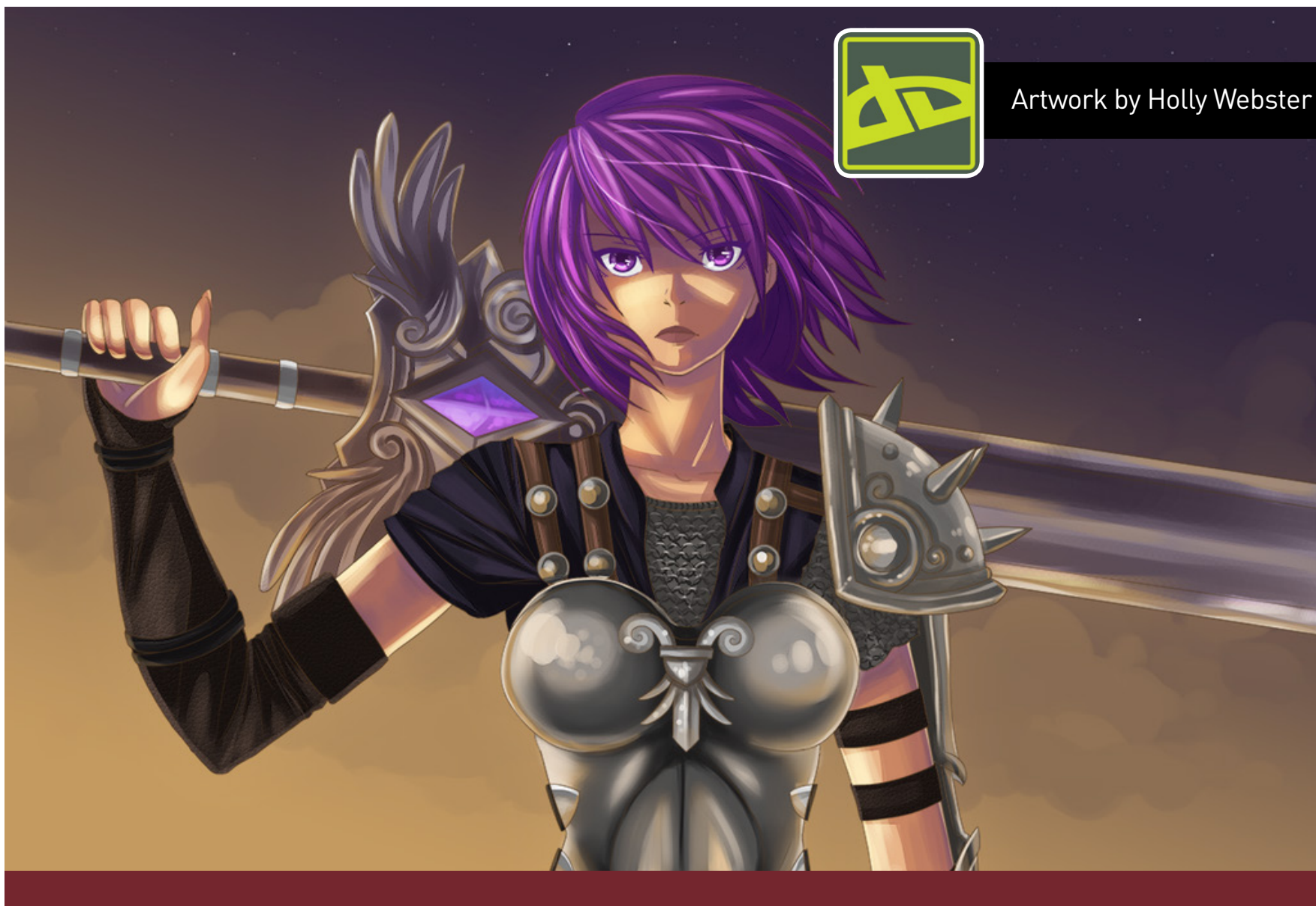
Please note: these are voluntary positions.

WHO IS BELLONA?

~~~~~ By Julian Martinez & Jorg van der Velden ~~~~~

*War – a place for glory and shame, bravery and depravity, sinners and saints. No single god can encompass the splendor, savagery and desperation that follow the clash of nations, resulting in multiple deities sporting warfare in their portfolio. The Roman goddess presiding over the brutal nature of combat and inspiring a frenzy bordering on bloodlust in her followers is Bellona, the Goddess of War.*





## LORE

"Dark Bellona, with bloody hand" is a close companion to Mars, the Roman war-god, and the balance to his somewhat tranquil demeanor. She focuses mainly on the rage and joy of battle, making those who worship her akin to the Norse berserkers. Due to this aggressive nature, and the fact that the land surrounding her temples is symbolically foreign, dealings with other nations were performed on the steps of her temples. Not only because this gave them a 'neutral' ground to negotiate, but also because declarations of war took place at her temples, allowing the Romans to declare war and immediately act.

Thought to be Sabine, a collection of tribes north-east of Rome, in origin, worship of Bellona was brought to the Roman pantheon when Remus and Romulus abducted Sabine women to build

their new empire. Early rituals included human sacrifice and the mutilation of the arms and legs of the priests, who collect the blood to drink or offer to the Goddess of War to invoke her fury in battle.

Brutal, savage and merciless don't even begin to describe Bellona. Wielding any weapon with unsurpassed skill she uses every tool available to cut a bloody swath through the battlefield.

## ABILITIES

Before we dive into Bellona's abilities, she has a unique mechanic tied to her three regular abilities. When activating one of these abilities she switches to a different weapon, and remains in that 'stance' for as long as she remains in combat. Each weapon has its own attack chain and special effect tied to it, changing the way her basic attacks work. Sadly, the exact attack chains are not mentioned in the tooltips of the abilities





or under her stats, so you will have to make do with a general description of the speed of the attacks.

Let's start with her passive, "Master of War". Each basic attack that Bellona hits or is hit by gives her a stack that increases her protections by 4 and movement speed by 3%. There is a maximum of 5 stacks, and thus a total gain of 20 protections and 15% movement speed at full stacks. These stacks remain for 4 seconds after the last basic attack that connected.

Bellona's first active ability is "Shield Bash", a dash that damages enemies in a cone in front of her for 80/120/160/200/240 +40% of her physical power. It also slows all enemies hit by 30% for two seconds and switches her weapons to a sword and a shield. Bellona gains a stack of 'block' for each enemy hit with the dash and every third basic attack that connects with an enemy to a maximum

of 3 stacks of block. Each stack of 'block' nullifies one basic attack from an enemy and reflects 30% of the damage back in a cone in front of her. The sword and shield attack chain is relatively fast and very similar to her standard attack chain in feel. Activating "Shield Bash" costs 60 mana across all levels and it has a 15 second cooldown.

"Bludgeon" is Bellona's second active ability and an AoE (area of effect) attack around her, finishing with an overhand smash that is essentially a short line attack. The first stage of the attack, the AoE swing around her, deals 30/60/90/120/150 +25% of her physical power in damage. The overhand smash deals 70/130/190/250/310 +60% of her physical power in damage. What's more, each enemy god by the AoE swing increases the damage of the overhand smash by 30% (to a maximum of a 150% increase if all five enemy gods are hit), making this a very painful

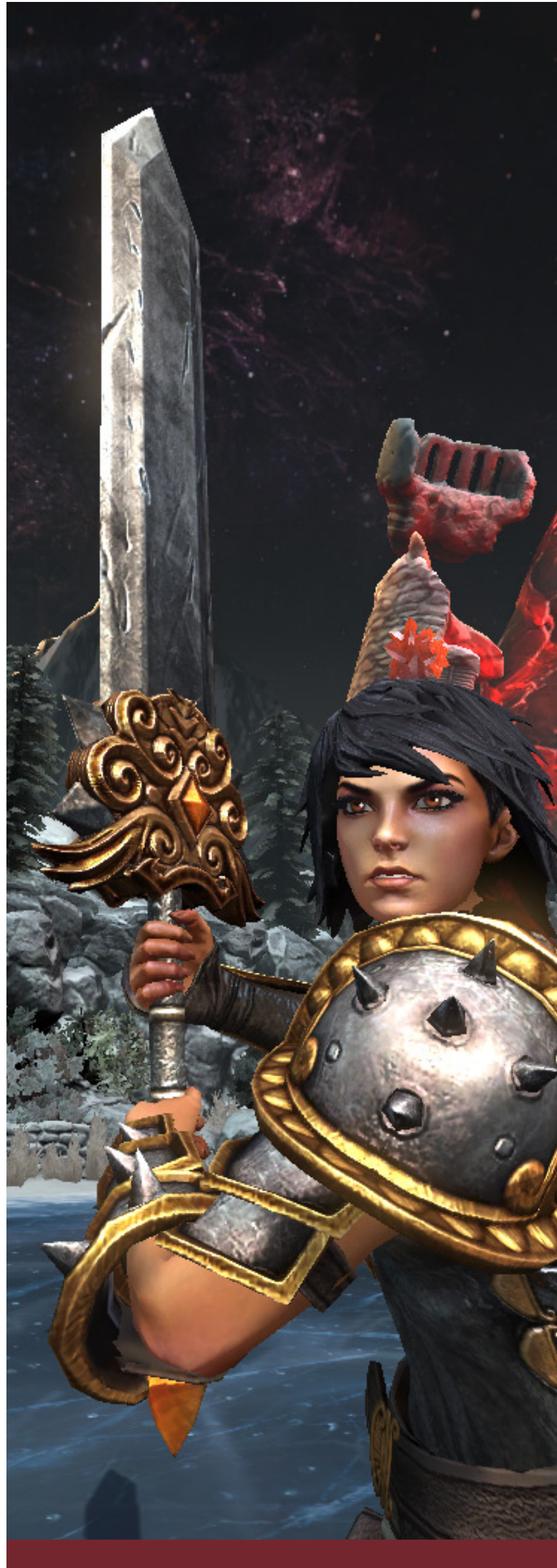




ability to be on the receiving end of. After activation Bellona switches to her hammer stance and her basic attacks deal damage in an area instead of just one target, similar to the third and fourth attacks of Osiris' hit chain. The hammer is the slowest of the weapons, but deals more damage per hit than any of the others. Activating "Budgeon" costs 60/65/70/75/80 mana and it has a 10 second cooldown.

Her third ability, and the last weapon in her arsenal, is "Scourge", a straight line attack that damages all opponents hit by 60/100/140/180/220 +50% of her physical power. It's also the only ability in the game that 'disarms' an opponent, a new form of CC (crowd control) that prevents enemies from basic attacking. The disarm lasts for 2/2.25/2.5/2.75/3 seconds. As you might have expected, the weapon associated with this ability is the scourge and has a slightly increased range compared to other melee attacks, similar to Awilix. Additionally, every third basic attack that Bellona hits heals 30/35/40/45/50 health. This is by far the fastest attack chain amongst the weapons, but consequently deals less damage per hit compared to the other stances. Activating "Scourge" costs 70/75/80/85/90 mana and it has an 18 second cooldown.

The final 'weapon' Bellona has at her disposal is "Eagle's Rally", her ultimate and the only active ability that doesn't change her stance. Upon using "Eagle's Rally" Bellona jumps forward, planting a Roman flag that grants 15/20/25/30/35 protections and 10/20/30/40/50 physical power to all allies in the area. Enemies that are directly under the flag as it lands receive 100/200/300/400/500 +50% of her physical power in damage and are stunned for 1 second. The flag persists for 6/8/10/12/14 seconds, costs 100 mana to activate and has a 75/70/65/60/55 second cooldown.





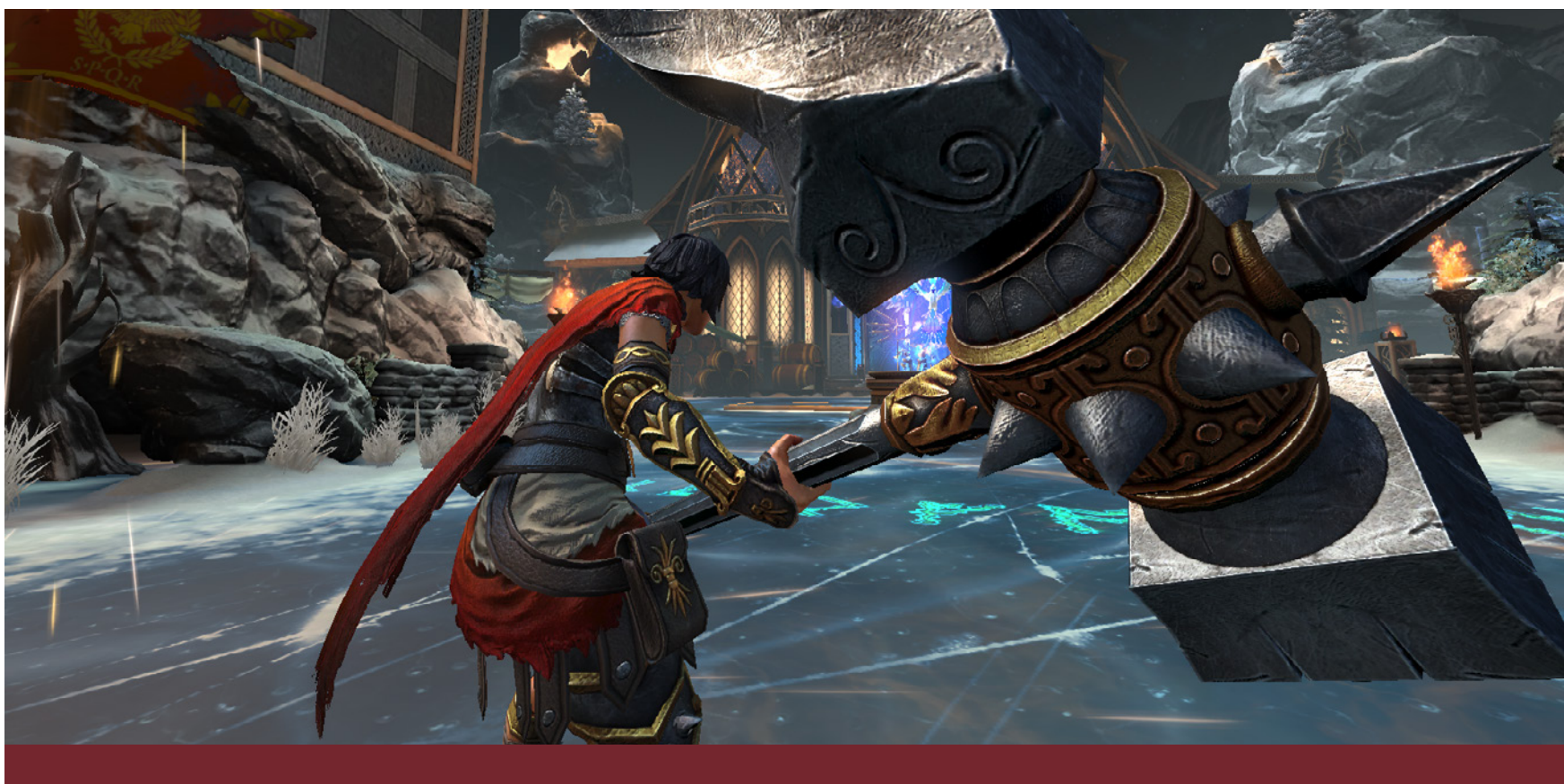
## SYNERGIES

Inherently, Bellona has some good to amazing synergies between her skills, but how these affect the actual game depends on the style of play you prefer and how you build her. You can roughly divide her kit in an active and a passive part: the skills themselves being the active side and the stances and her passive being the, well, passive. Focusing on the active part of her kit, building CDR (cooldown reduction), power and some defenses (a hybrid build as it were), gives her good burst damage with “Bludgeon” and decent to good CC with both “Shield Bash” and “Scourge”. Because of the CDR the player doesn’t need to be as aware of the order of the abilities used as they are back off cooldown relatively quickly and the stances aren’t as important. It does benefit the player to keep the stances in mind, as one or two ‘block’ stacks or a handful of seconds without basic attacks can seriously affect the fight.

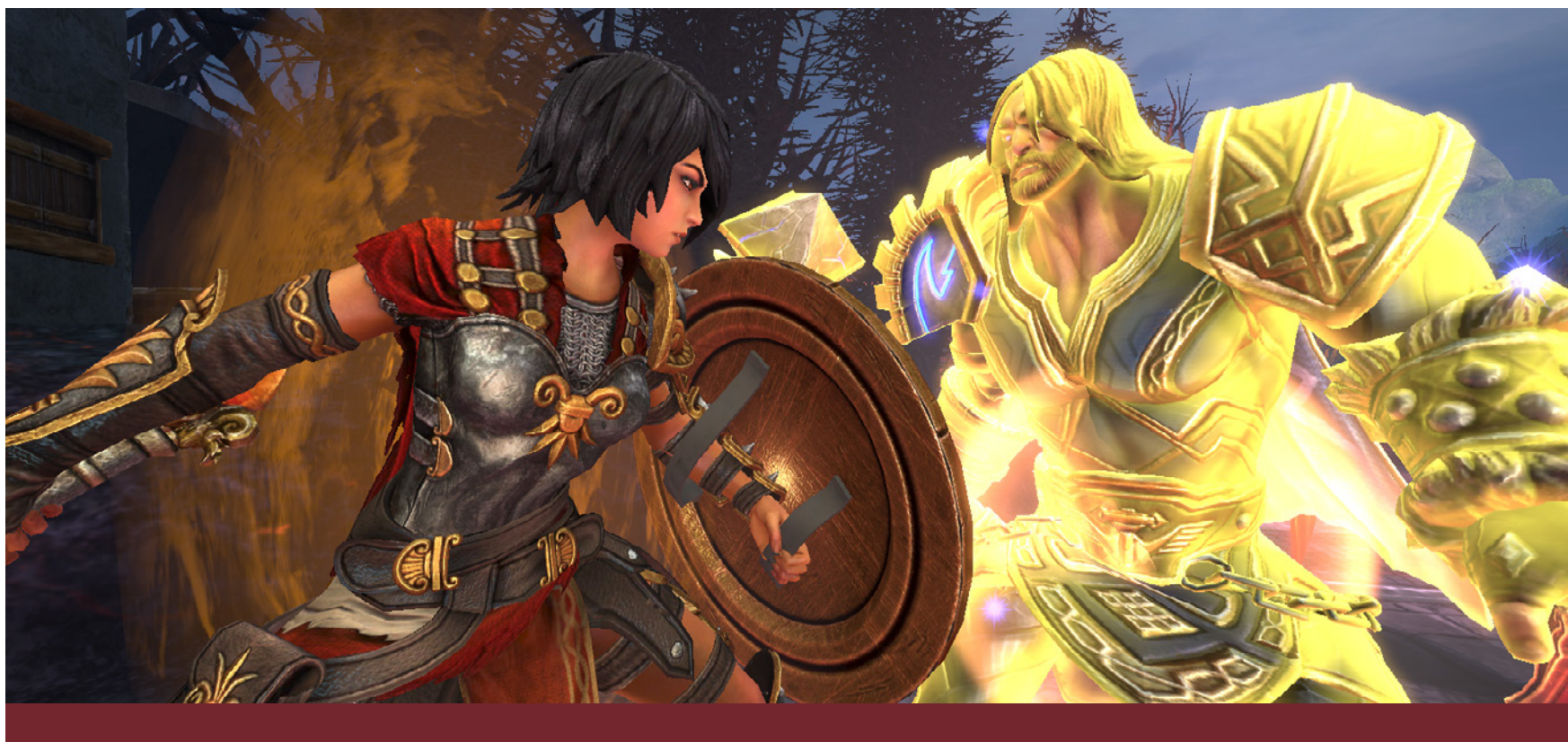
Setting your sights on the passive end of her kit, and as a result building attack speed and some lifesteal, requires more thought and focus but allows her to remain in the fight for longer and deal more

sustained damage. Building “Heavy Hammer” (enemies hit by a basic attack move 25% slower for 1 second) allows Bellona to chase enemies while never stopping auto attacking due to the increased movement speed she receives from her passive “Master of War” and the slow procs from “Heavy Hammer”. Abilities need to be used smartly, as the cooldowns are relatively long and the wrong stance at the wrong time can be the difference between victory and defeat. Before the adjustment of her numbers, and “Scourge” healed 110 health every third hit instead of 50, the most sound option was to spend as much time in that stance as possible. With the healing greatly reduced, “Shield Bash” has become more of a viable option earlier in the game. “Bludgeon” is generally not used for the stance due to the slow attack speed and reduced lifesteal percentage for being an AoE attack. It does have its uses for clearing a wave or camp quickly when there’s no direct threat and your health is quite high. The longer cooldowns also mean you effectively have less CC, so using an ability for just that purpose requires some extra consideration.

There are other ways to build Bellona,







and they all depend on the role she has on the team. These two builds are the most common though, and suit her most common roles.

## ROLES

Generally speaking, Bellona is most effective in the solo lane and the jungle. The sustain and control from “Scourge” work well against the warrior heavy solo lanes at this point, and “Bludgeon” gives quick and efficient clear. “Shield Bash” provides a lot of utility as an initiation or escape tool, and ‘Block’ stacks can help get you favorable trades. In the jungle it’s pretty similar build and play wise, and “Eagle’s Rally” allows for very effective, and frightening, ganks with the stun, increased damage and increased protections.

No matter what play style you choose to take with Bellona, it’s easy to overextend yourself and get caught out. Besides “Shield Bash” only “Eagle’s Rally” provides mobility, and that is on a very long cooldown. “Shield Bash” is also blocked by both enemy gods and minions, so good positioning from the enemy can block your only escape after you initiated with “Eagle’s Rally”.

## JUGGLING

If I had to summarize Bellona in one word, it would be juggling. Being conscious of the active and passive parts of her abilities is a must, and more than once will you have to make the choice between either a beneficial ability or a beneficial stance. But that’s just the juggling of her in the actual match itself. Because Bellona’s abilities have so many aspects to them, finding a good balance for her also requires a lot of juggling. No one aspect should overrule others, but still needs to have a tangible impact on the game. As mentioned in the sidebar, there is a chance that another re-examination of her numbers may happen, which will affect how she will be played in both casual and competitive games.

It’s hard to decide whether Bellona is balanced or not, but I do think she’s a good addition to the roster of deities currently in the game. She brings some interesting new mechanics, some of which I hope will be retroactively introduced with other gods. Overall, a worthy addition to the Battleground of the Gods. ■

*By Julian Martinez & Jorg van der Velden*



# 4-MAN CONQUEST PREMADES: THE ONE WHO GOT LEFT BEHIND

~~~~~ By Ashley Eaton-Jephcote ~~~~~

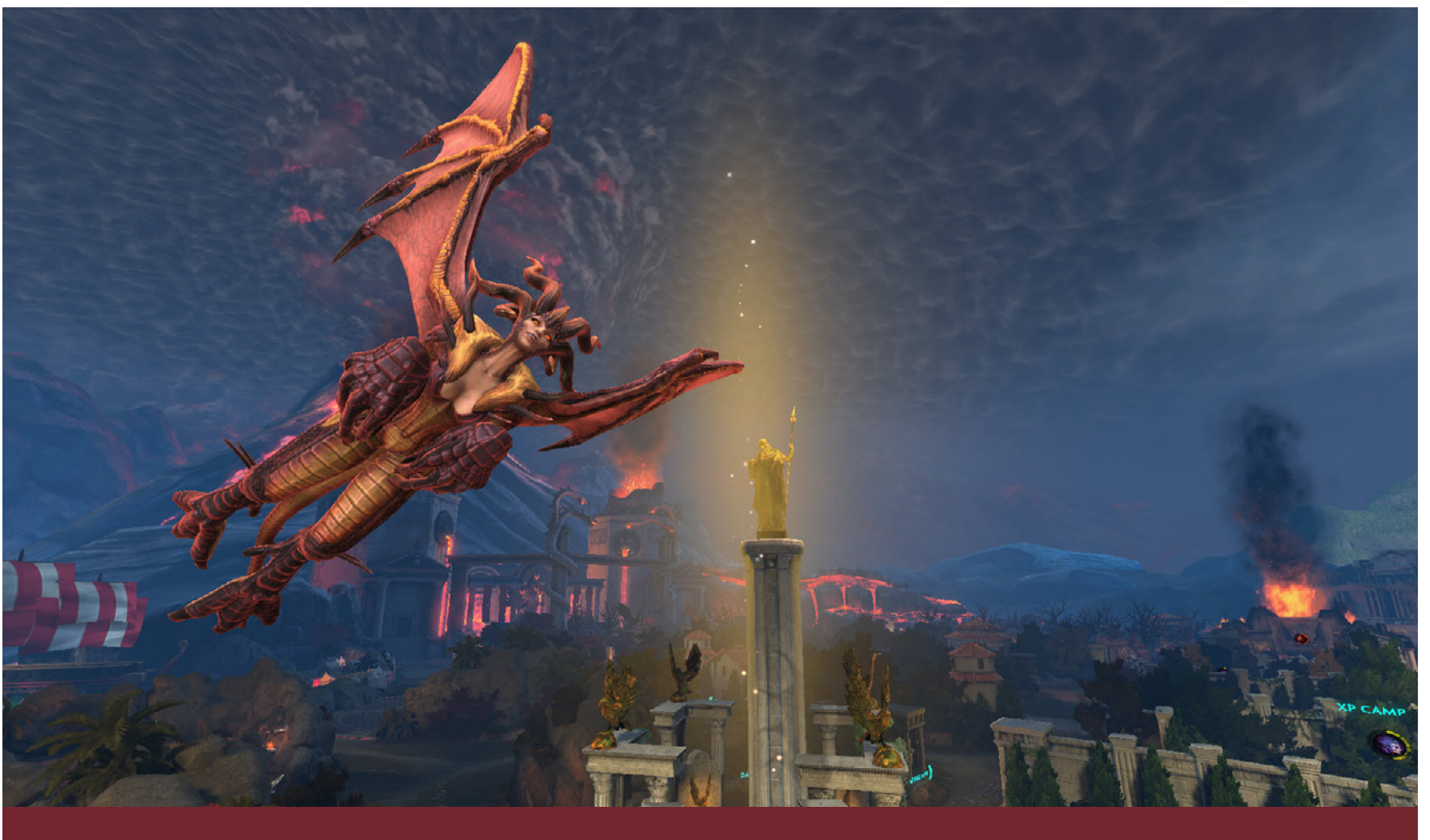
In this piece I'm going to be looking over the reasons as to why we currently do not have 4-Man Conquest Premades (4-MP for future reference) and food for thought that may help change that. As of right now, partying up as four people and wanting to go into Conquest is a no go (unless we luckily get a Match of the Day (MOTD)) which is unfortunate. What sort of reasons do we have for not having 4-MP in Conquest right now?

Whilst in the past we have actually had 4-MP in Conquest, the reasons (or rather problems) as to why we now don't have that option may be mentioned below.

TOXICITY TOWARDS THE ONE PLAYER OUTSIDE THE PARTY.

This is an untypical scenario where the 4-MP are going to side with each other in most scenarios. Should any conflict happen between the team, it will most likely end up with the 4-MP against the person solo queueing, which doesn't make a good experience for the one person who is in that situation. There isn't much to be done about those sort of situations, except hope that these things work themselves out and toxicity lowers over time.

A counter argument to this is what about





other modes? In the Normal Joust queue, you can go as a 2-Man Premade and essentially be in the same situation with the solo person, with it being 'two against one'. Same for Siege, you can queue as a 3-Man Premade and be 'three against one', should these situations occur. It's not a great way to look at things, but why is Conquest the exception when other Normal modes could have this happen in their games?

THE ONE PLAYER OUTSIDE OF THE PREMADE IS FORCED INTO A ROLE THEY DO NOT WANT.

This would be during the lobby phase, where the one person solo queueing may not even know they are a premade, which is exactly the point I want to bring up. Unless it's obvious (names are all similar such as NameMe123 and NameMe124) or they say it themselves, you aren't going to know they're a premade until you load into the game, and even then that isn't certain unless you see four clan tags, where it's pretty much confirmed. It's not just the 4-MP that can force you into a role; that could happen out of nowhere, premades

don't even need to be around for that to happen.

Unfortunately, this is similar to the point above where not much can be done about it because this is something that players will do. It's not great, but this is not something that occurs just inside the 4-MP world, surely?

A SUPPOSED HARDER TIME CREATING EVEN MATCHES WITH 4-MP IN PLACE, I.E MATCHMAKING.

A day-to-day topic involving anything in SMITE is the Matchmaking. Unfortunately, the only thing we as players can do to give the system an easier time at creating even matches is to avoid using alternate accounts (so having your Diamond ranked friend play with you on your level five account is a no go). Aside from that, we can only hope that we get as fair a match as the system thinks it gave us, because that's all it tries to do. No match is purposely set out unfairly, the match is created with as far a match in terms of the ratings each player has as possible.

So if you want to avoid 'broken' or otherwise unfair matches, avoid altering your premade in terms of what account you have, maybe even who

you invite as well. You or someone else might be the highly ranked player or sitting on the alternate account, but are you all prepared for either one of you to be slaughtered or get the flack for dominating?

But overall, this is not specifically a 4-MP problem, and so again why is the fourth player being left out?

CONTROLLING THE SURRENDER VOTE.

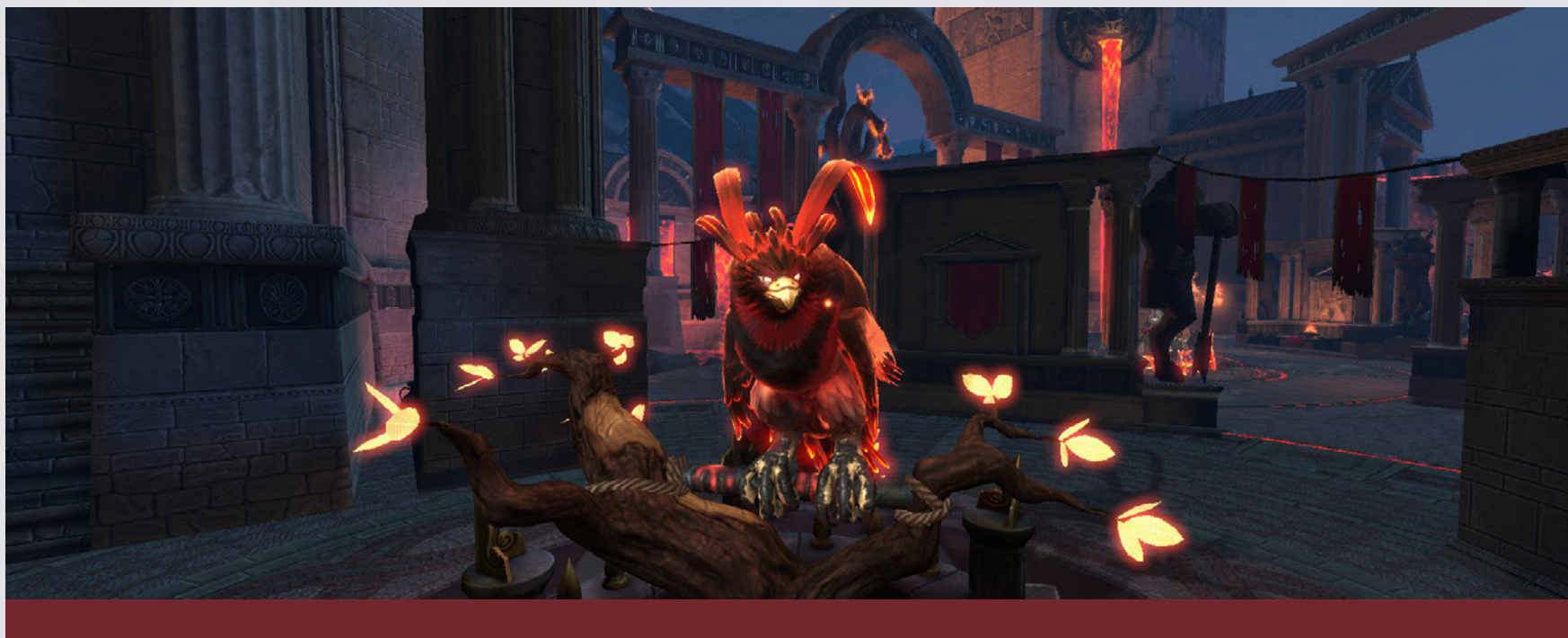
A big reason as to why premades are probably not too well liked overall is for controlling the surrender vote either way. Want to get out of a game but there's a premade hitting no for reasons that are perhaps unjust? Maybe you wanted to continue playing but the premade quickly got you out of a game because they decided that's how it's going to be? Both happen within other game modes, and can even happen in Conquest in the form of a 2 or 3-MP denying a surrender vote when it may have gone through with other solo players.



Now this is not to say that it's okay for any of the above situations to happen in other game modes, or Conquest itself, but we allow smaller premades to control the surrender vote via denying. Could we really justify not allowing 4-MP in Conquest on the basis of them being able to control the surrender vote via instant F6?

STACKING REPORTS ON THE PERSON WHO IS SOLO.

Similar to the toxicity point made above, there is theoretically nothing stopping the 4-MP stacking reports on the person outside of the party, for reasons that may or may not be legitimate. With this situation, it could actually go both ways. If the solo person actually did need reporting, then that's four more reports going the way of good. However, the idea here is that the stacked reports on the solo person are unjust and should not have been filed. Here we have faith in the report system, as it is likely to be known that the four quick consecutive



reports against a player will be from a premade.

Just because multiple reports were filed against a player on one (possibly more if they meet multiple times) occasion doesn't automatically mean action will be taken against the unfortunate solo player. Each case would be looked into, those who are actioned against have had it happen for a reason, so a premade filing multiple reports for just or unjust reasons will not change the end result. So how would a fourth person inside a premade affect this, since any form of premade or even a bunch of solo players can have the same effect?

WHY NOT JUST GRAB ONE MORE FOR A FIFTH AND CHANGE QUEUE?

Another common reply as to 'fixing' the 4-MP in Conquest problem, is to just grab one more and go into the Normal: Conquest Pre-Made queue. Well, whilst that may work, sometimes not every premade of four can find a fifth, or perhaps there isn't a willing fifth person to join. In either case, you can't round it up to five magically and so you are then at a loss. No fifth to go into a different queue, and the ordinary conquest doesn't allow four people in a premade.

This doesn't happen for any other mode, and whilst it is understood that Conquest is the main

mode of SMITE, hence the separate queue for a 5-Man Premade, that should just stop them going into the ordinary Conquest queue and not a 4-MP, right? Let's say that you did manage to find a fifth person though, and you start to queue up for a Conquest Pre-Made game. These queues are considerably longer overall compared to any other game mode in the normal mode category. This can be tedious and have an effect on the overall experience¹. It then might be the case that the banning and drafting phase is totally new, which isn't an element that is sampled in the normal category. You might then find yourself against a premade with a lot more preparation under their belts, more synergy and even more used to competing on a higher level. A bunch of friends from outside the game socialising going against a practiced and competing team may not be fun for either side.

So if the answer is to simply grab a fifth just to compensate for the exception of the fourth player, is the experience going to either be the same or as enjoyable overall? Possibly not, it's a workaround.

Now there may be some other minor points that have been missed, but these seem to be the bigger reasons relating as to why 4-MP in Conquest aren't currently allowed. Perhaps we can see a change in this, and hope we don't have to leave one behind. ■

By Ashley Eaton-Jephcote



~~~~~ By Tanner Schelle ~~~~~

In every RPG you will find various ways to complete your objective. Most RPG's have a wide variety of weapons, playable characters, skill trees, and itemization. Hi-Rez Studios has done an amazing job at giving us a variety of all of these options. But just as every game SMITE has preferred characters, items, and abilities that get picked above all others. Highly skilled and pro SMITE players alike drop dozens of hours into working on finding the best builds, most preferred gods, and strategies to make their chances of winning a game more in their favor. This is what becomes the "meta".

The meta, to put it simply, is what is popular right now. We see the meta change from week to week, patch to patch. God and item balance adjustments change the meta to an extreme. Some weeks you will see a god banned out constantly. The next week a patch will come out that will change that god slightly and then you may not see them picked for a long time.

Currently we see that Bastet, Thor, Athena, Anhur, Serqet, and Xbalanque all have first pick or ban status. This means in ranked that you either ban them out so neither team can get them, or you make sure that you are able to pick them up as soon as possible. Sometimes these gods can be the flavor of the patch, meaning they've only had minor tweaks to them which made them more viable in ranked and competitive play. Other times gods can be over performing because they are not balanced after release and they will be picked because of this. People find them to be "OP" or over-powered. Either way, there is a reason for all of the top picks or bans and it is in your best interest to keep up with this knowledge. Most of the meta is based off of pro players so paying attention to it is wise.

The meta doesn't only consist of the gods picks and bans though. It has a lot to do with the map as well. Right now the meta is to have the Mid, Hunter,



and Support all start at the red attack power buff and then have mid go to lane. After helping with the red buff for Mid the Hunter and Support go to the purple attack speed buff and drop it for the Hunter to pick up, then they go to their lane (unless you have Sylvanus support, if you do he should pick it up as your lane clear will be much better for the first laning phase). Meanwhile on the other side of the map the Jungle and the Solo gods are starting at the yellow speed buff. This will be dropped for the Jungle and once picked up they make their way over to kill the blue mana camp and get the buff for the Solo laner while after going to lane. That is how season two of SMITE has been since the beginning as it has been the most efficient way to get the buffs and get to lane as fast as possible.

## “ THE META DOESN'T ONLY CONSIST OF THE GODS PICKS AND BANS THOUGH. IT HAS A LOT TO DO WITH THE MAP AS WELL.”

We also see items builds as part of the meta. Hunters are a good example of this because they all usually end up building the same. We see them starting with Bluestone Pendant, Spiked Gauntlet, and one health potion. This is because this is the most efficient way to have enough Mana, Health, and get to start stacking Devourers Gauntlet as soon as possible. Meanwhile the mid lane god may start out with Vampiric Shroud, Lost Artifact, and one health and one Mana potion. This will get them to start building stacks for Doom Orb hopefully on their first back to base.

Last but not least we have ability leveling to think about. Loki is a great example because he







can go into many different roles but has similar leveling. I will focus on Loki solo which has been in the meta for a while now. Loki starts with his Decoy to start help clear the jungle camps and keeps leveling that as much as possible till it is level four. He will have to get his other abilities as well but prioritizing the Decoy on him for lane clear is the most efficient way to play him. This is why taking gods into the jungle practice mode can be helpful as you get to see the power spikes of your god clearly depending on itemization and ability leveling.

Remember, the meta is nothing more than what is popular right now. If you follow the meta you will be more likely to win more games than you lose. However, the meta is not an “end-all be-all” to the game of SMITE. Sometimes the meta is not correct by the numbers and picks are just a fad. Make sure you think for yourself as to what gods you are good at, what items work best in the situation, and have a reason behind your methods. You may just shape the new meta. ■

*By Tanner Schelle*









# NA VS. EU META AND STYLES

By Ralph Babunga

Normalcy exists anywhere, in ones daily life, within a program, within activities as well as within a game. The normalcy within most MOBAs has come to be known as the “meta”. What makes the meta, what breaks the meta? Who establishes this order within SMITE? How are metas different between regions? Have any of you wondered these? I sure have and I think I have found the answer.

A “meta”, within SMITE and games in general, refers to how the game is played by the players. Things like popular strategies, which Gods to use, which Gods to ban, who goes where and what does that person do in their position in order to contribute to the team’s success. SMITE as a whole has a general meta, consisting of 5 classes each with their original designed purpose. Guardians are built to be support characters, tanking up damage and engaging in team fights that favor your team. Hunters are Attack Damage Carries, they farm up and deal heavy damage, not with their abilities but with their basic attacks. Both belong in the long lane, to protect each

other. Mages find their home in the Mid lane. They are heavy burst ability users which rely more on landing their abilities to do more damage. Assassins lurk within the jungles, attacking from behind and catching you off guard. Last, but certainly not least even after their hyper nerf, the Warriors. Relying on no one else they reside in the solo lane, a 1v1 battle. they are

**“ A “META”, WITHIN SMITE AND GAMES IN GENERAL, REFERS TO HOW THE GAME IS PLAYED BY THE PLAYERS.”**

tanky deal damage all the while soaking it as well. Some might consider one of them to be overpowered but that is all personal opinion. This is what makes up the basic skeleton of Gods in SMITE, set by HiRez and their designs, nevertheless, bones are meant to be broken. As a player base we have broken set roles and have mixed and matched roles with Gods,





putting Mages in the Jungle and Hunters in solo lane. Each region, North America (NA) and Europe (EU), with its own opinion of who's overpowered and which isn't worth a minute of their time, which strategy to use at what time and what is considered great risk for low reward. We have defined the meta of SMITE!

The two major regions, NA and EU, have had a major impact on the normalcy we call meta today. They have defined which Gods excel in which places. As well as which items work well within these roles. Although just because one region states that one composition, or strategy, works over another the other region might have some conflicting arguments, and that is what we are here to discuss.

## NORTH AMERICA (CONTAINING THE UNITED STATES AND CANADA)

Within North America the basic SMITE skeleton exists. General roles go to the Gods that have been designed for such a role, as explained above. In spite of that, there have been several tweaks to this that continue to change even today. Ymir, for example, finds his home as a support but due to his passive, which increases his basic attack damage, can also jungle quite efficiently. Warriors in the support role have also become quite popular, as seen greatly with Hercules and Sun Wukong in the support role. Not only are they tanky enough to soak up damage and





initiate, but can clear the wave amazingly early game and rotate just as fast if not faster than the Guardians. Mages have been moved to the solo lane as it works just like mid but without the pressure of another lane from either right or left depending on which side you start on. Very few Mages, Freya and Ao Kuang, are suited for the jungle or ADC roles. It is honestly one big mishmash of roles within this region, bringing a unique touch as well as some real fun to the “Battleground of the Gods”.

Styles of play within this region are usually aggressive, maybe it is due to the NA culture maybe not, but one can expect to see several invades early game, immense collapses on one God on the enemy team to secure an objective as well as courageous tower dives that, in all honesty, should not be possible.

## EUROPE (CONTAINING ALL COUNTRIES WITHIN THE CONTINENT OF EUROPE)

Most would agree Europeans can be weird, this is shown through their play style. The European meta usually consists of wacky compositions, popularizing the famous TankRir, Fenrir within the Support Role. They have not only brought about interesting composition but also interesting strategies. In general they have moved the Assassins into places you’d not expect, Solo, Support, ADC, pretty much anything but Jungle. A lot less aggressive than their NA counterparts, EU is mostly about zoning, a form of intimidation, in order to bring out







the other team and force them to make the first move. Patience is the name of the game within Europe.

## CONTESTING OBJECTIVES

In regards to objectives, the Gold Fury and the Fire Giant, EU zones the objectives more often than not. They do not immediately engage on the objective but they do bait the first move from the enemy team in order to find an opening to eliminate any threat of contesting. NA, yet, more often than not wastes no time and engages immediately when they get the chance, and any threat gets immediately exterminated.

## GENERAL PICKS AND BANS

Bans within the North American region often focus on late game, more specifically single target damage. More often than not, Cupid, Xbalanque, Serget are banned all due to their immense presence and high single target damage output.

Bans within Europe focus on teamfights, usually because of Europe being a more teamfight oriented region. Gods like Poseidon, Sylvanus and Cupid are banned because of how they have AoE ultimates. All heading towards entire team kills, based on team synergy and coordination.

## PLAYSTYLES

### NA

Aggression within the North American servers is rampant, early invades, as well as unprecedented tower dives make NA one heck of a battleground. Working on the principle of “high risk high reward” NA makes gaining kills due to bravery quite satisfying.

### EU

Zoning and patience describes the European server quite well. Seldom taking risks but rather waiting for an opening to present itself then striking when the iron is hot. Not wasting a single moment in the process of swift elimination.

Anything can change, including the meta. Pre-season 2 players believed that the set meta would never change. HiRez however has done an outstanding job at proving them wrong, shifting the meta on its head and changing everything players thought they knew. The meta is not written in stone. We as the Player base hold the ability to change it through skill. The power to break it, to change it belongs to you. So you go out there and show people that unconventional comps work.

That is all fellow SMITE'rs,  
until next time [VGG] ■

*By Ralph Babunga*



# INTERVIEW WITH SPIFFSINISTER

~~~~~ By Hunter ErkenBrack ~~~~~

We had the opportunity to catch up with Eric, also known as the extremely e-famous SpiffSinister. You might know him from his many YouTube shows such as “This Just In” or more recently “Last Week to SMITE”. He is currently attending college in the northern hemisphere and took some time out of his busy life to answer some of our questions:

SMITE Mag: When was the first time you decided to make SMITE related content and what was it? Any inspirations for your first piece in particular?

SpiffSinister: The first video I ever made for SMITE was a God Guide for Tyr. I made it when I was fairly new to the game and I disagreed with most of the items I suggested as well as the ability leveling order. I was inspired to make the video by DotaCinema’s guides for Dota 2. I quickly realized I didn’t have the required game knowledge to continue.

SM: “This Just In” has a gag reel at the end - Do you feel like it is ever forced because “I have to have something for the gag reel” or are you often cutting out content that “didn’t make the gag reel cut”?

SS: The gag reel for “This Just In” is never forced. I was already acting like an idiot, I just started adding those moments to the end of the video. There are *many* moments that I edit out. I’ve got a lot of footage to work with :D





SM: Can you talk us through a normal filming process for one of your shows?

SS: Filming for “This Just In” is quite short, actually. It usually takes me about 20 minutes to get good takes. I just hit record and start right up. Writing takes a lot, lot, lot, longer. I’m constantly writing things so I can’t even give you an estimate on that. Editing takes me 2-5 hours for “This Just In” depending on what’s in the episode. “Last Week to SMITE” is different. It took me an hour and a half to film and future episodes will most likely take just as long.

SM: What is written on the sheets of paper for “This Just In”?

SS: The sheets of paper I hold during “This Just In” are actually scripts for that episode and past episodes.

SM: What is your favorite work of content that you have created/help create?

SS: My favorite piece of content that I’ve made has to be “It Will Get Better”. It’s basically a video in which I talk about the worst year of my life, how

I hated living, and didn’t think it would get better. Having people message me or even come up to me at SWC and say something to the effect of “That video helped me so much, you have no idea” was incredibly humbling and touching. Entertainment is great but having a platform to positively impact people, especially young people, that’s special.

“I’M CONSTANTLY WRITING THINGS SO I CAN’T EVEN GIVE YOU AN ESTIMATE ON THAT.”

SM: Do you have anything you want to improve on as a content creator?

SS: One thing I’ve been working on is just stepping up the overall quality of my videos. If you take a look back at earlier videos in one of my series, the progression is astounding. “Last Week to SMITE” is getting closer and closer to the level that I’m aiming for.



SM: Do you have any advice for people aspiring to become a content creator like you?

SS: 1) You're going to be insulted, your work is going to be insulted, your Mom is going to be insulted. You have to know that going in and just focus on getting better. Listen to the criticism and use it. Block out the nonsense.
2) Make something different!!!!!! I cannot stress this enough. I see people trying to replicate Schileru all the time. There can only be one Schileru! It's ok to make similar videos if that's what you want to make, just don't do it solely because it's popular. (Schileru is in agreement with me on this, for the record)

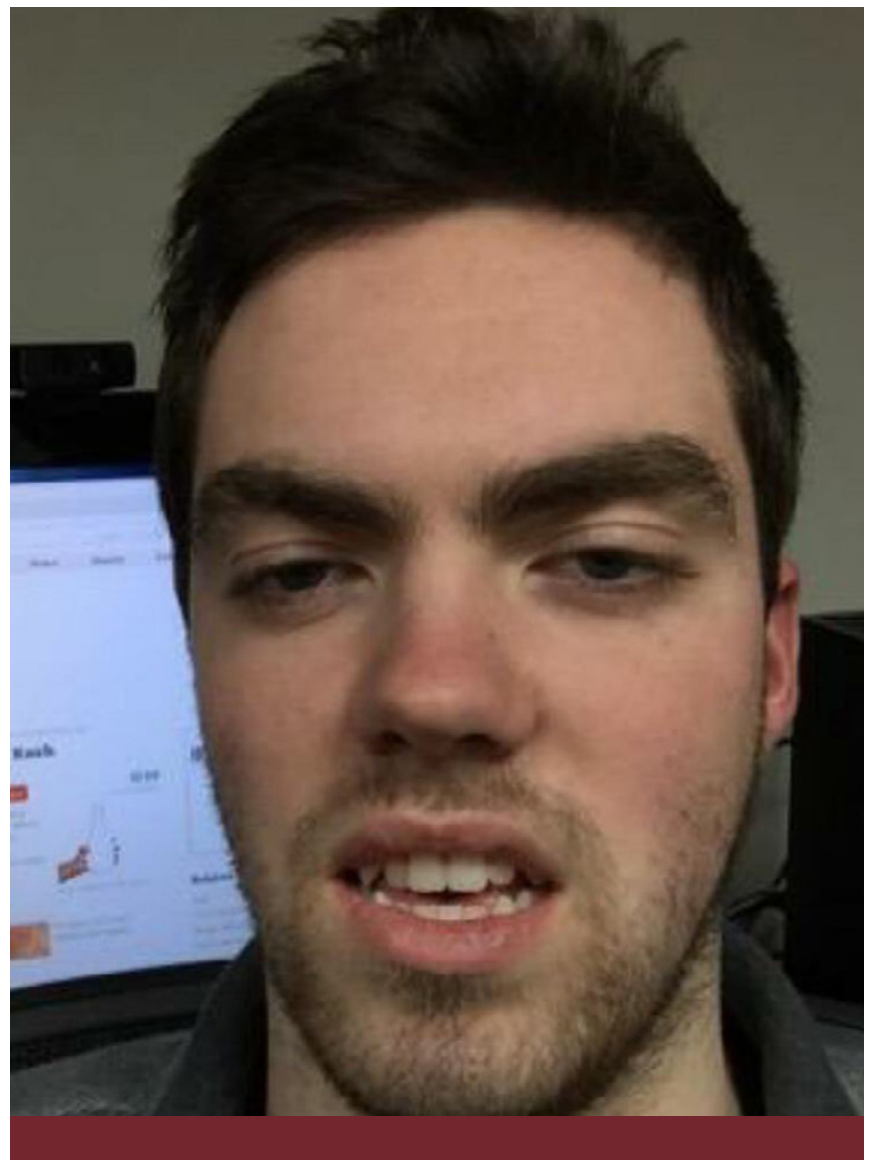
SM: What piece of content (Skin, gamemode, god, anything) would you like to see added to SMITE?

SS: I want to see Jakiro (Dota 2 hero) in SMITE! Either Jakiro or Tiny :3

SM: Lets say you just got promoted to Lead Designer and your opinion is now equal to Hi-Rez Scott's, what are three things you would change about

SMITE from a balance or design perspective?

SS: 1) I would add a function that alerted players when action was taken against players they've



reported. 2) Remodel Arachne. She looks like a turd with legs. 3) I'd buff Neith/Chaac/Zeus a tad and remove Serget from the game. I hate Serget.

SM: Are you rooting for any professional teams right now or have any favorite players/content creators?

SS: Table Top from Geek and Sundry is one of my favorite series' ever. It's so well done and features a *ton* of cool people. All of the SMITE content creators are so nice and talented, wouldn't want to have to pick from one of them <3
I just like watching good games really...I started listing teams I like but ended up listing everyone! Oops.

SM: What games do you play other than SMITE?

SS: I love First Person Shooters, Counter Strike: Global Offensive and Battlefield 4 are fun. I recently played through TellTale's games. Still working through The Walking Dead! Been playing Ocarina of Time/Smash/Majora's Mask on my 3ds recently. So much fun.

SM: Who or what is your favorite content creator or piece of content (series or otherwise) outside of your own?

SS: I love what Weak3n and Incon are doing on YouTube with their guide series'. Other pros are starting to upload content as well, it's great for the scene.

SM: Can you tell us about any upcoming projects or content from you?

SS: I've been promising a return to The Adventures of Siff Spinister forever but it is actually coming back...so keep an eye out :D
Where do you see yourself in a few years? Any long term goals?
In a few years I expect nothing less than world domination.

SM: Anything else you would like to say to your fans or yet to be fans?

SS: Thanks for keeping me cool. ■



COFFEE BREAK

This month's wordsearch focuses on the pre-launch gods/goddesses!



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WALLPAPERS

Below, you can find our newest wallpaper you can use to decorate your desktop, tablet, or mobile device with. You could also print it out as a poster!



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WIN GEMS

CLICK TO ENTER



**This month's caption competition
will have three winners:**

1st Place: 800 Gems

2nd Place: 400 Gems

3rd Place: 200 Gems

Each winner will also receive *Serqet & her Madam*

Blade skin, as well a SMITE Magazine Icon!

SMITE STATS

By SMITEstuff.com



The guys and girls over at SMITEstuff have put together a set of statistics from this month in SMITE that you may find interesting. They can be found below, but be sure to check them out!

The percentages shown below are the average of all games played between 20th February and 20th March.

MOST POPULAR GODS:

- Bellona - 22.43%
- Ymir - 17.17%
- Poseidon - 14.86%
- Neith - 13.32%
- Xbalanque - 13.13%

LEAST POPULAR GODS

- Vamana - 3.19%
- Kumbhakarna - 3.46%
- Osiris - 3.58%
- Zhong Kui - 3.61%
- Cabrakan - 3.85%

TOP 5 GODS RISING IN POPULARITY

- Artemis - 38.18%
- Xbalanque - 37.07%
- Isis - 29.61%
- Fenrir - 25.83%
- Sobek - 24.90%

• TOP 5 GODS FALLING IN POPULARITY

- Osiris - -45.58%
- Nox - -40.58%
- Apollo - -36.69%
- Chaac - -34.51%
- Nemesis - -27.24%

TOP 5 SKINS

- Loki Infiltrator - 44.97%
- Nu Wa Water Dancer - 38.58%
- Ullr The Survivor - 36.30%
- Geb G.E.B. 1 - 34.81%
- Chaac Slaughterhouse - 33.52%

BOTTOM 5 SKINS

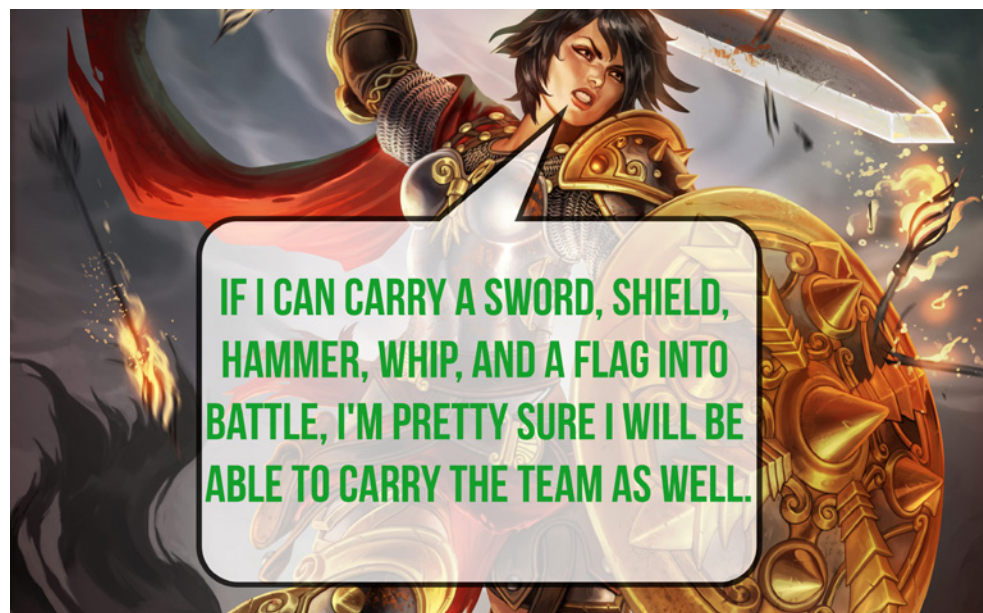
- Ymir Twitchymir - 0.53%
- Xbalanque Football Star 2014 - 1.14%
- Thor Iron Gamer - 1.68%
- Apollo Team Solomid - 2.95%
- Xbalanque - Weltmeister 2014 - 3.34%



CAPTION COMPETITION

LAST ISSUE'S WINNERS

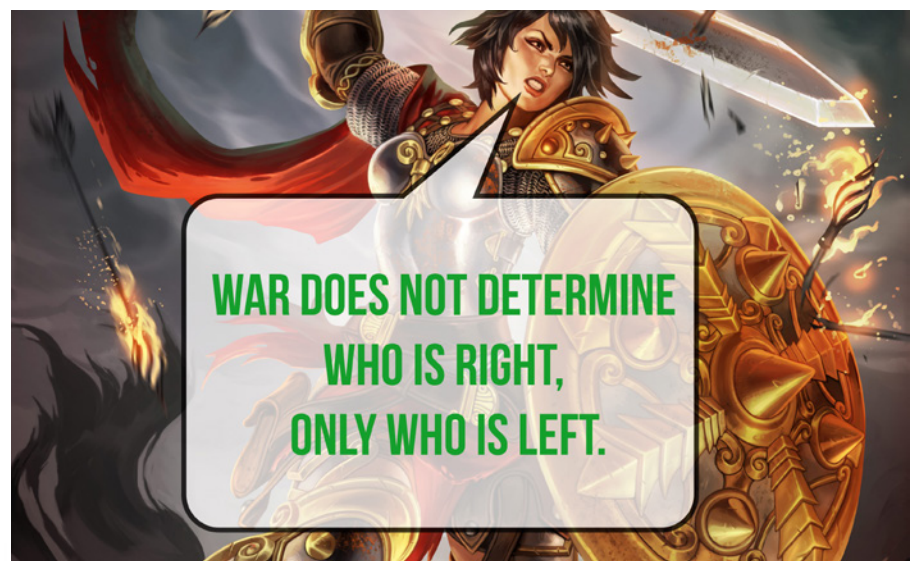
1ST PLACE - CORVENOUS



2ND PLACE - CHELZOR



3RD PLACE - ANACTORIA



The winners will have the gems added to their SMITE account and the skin code e-mailed to them.

MEN FIGHT. GODS SMITE.



SMITE

BATTLEGROUND OF THE GODS

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**Newest God Release:
Medusa - The Gorgon
See You Next Issue!**